

# PARACELSUS

His Mystical and  
Medical Philosophy



Manly P. Hall

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by Manly P. Hall

## PARACELSUS: HIS MYTICAL AND MEDICAL PHILOSOPHY

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*Title page of Basilica Chymica by Oswaldus Crollius, amanuensis to Paracelsus.*

*At lower right of plate is portrait of Paracelsus.*

# THE MYSTICAL AND MEDICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PARACELSUS

## Part I: Universal Energy

Lieutenant Colonel Fielding Garrison, M.D. was a serious student of medical history, and devoted many years to the accumulation and arrangement of the Surgeon General's Library. His work titled *An Introduction to History of Medicine* is an outstanding book in its field. Garrison says of Paracelsus that he "was the precursor of chemical pharmacology and therapeutics, and the most original medical thinker of the 16th century." The same author states that this early Swiss physician was far ahead of his time in noting the geographic differences of disease, and was almost the only asepsist between Mondevill and Lister. It has also been customary to regard Paracelsus as the outstanding reformer of medical practice, standing between the old procedures and the rise of the modern scientific method. He is referred to as "the Luther of physicians," and shares honors with Vesalius in anatomy and Pare in surgery.

As this series of articles unfolds, it will be obvious why Paracelsus has become the central figure in a heated controversy involving both the theory and practice of the healing arts. Historians applauding his progress and originality, at the same time bewail his mystical speculations and his excursions into the fields of animal magnetism and electromagnetic

THEOPHRAST<sup>9</sup> PARACELSUS



The lively Portraiture of the most famous and  
profunda Philosopher and Physician Aureol<sup>9</sup>  
Theophrastus Theophrastus Paracelsus Bom  
bard of Hohenheim. who was Possessed  
y<sup>e</sup> 47<sup>th</sup> years of his age . . .

From Philosophy Reformed and Improved, London, 1657  
Early Portrait of Paracelsus, including a reference to the circumstance of his death.

therapy. He has come to be regarded as a most complex man, combining a high degree of skilled observation with a variety of superstitious beliefs. Some have attempted to excuse his intellectual eccentricities on the ground that he was a product of a time in which there was no clear division between religion and science, and a large part of knowledge was still inseparable from astrology, alchemy, cabalism, and the Hermetic arts. It is obvious, however, that Paracelsus was aware of the impending struggle between medicine and magic. He warned his contemporaries that to divide therapy from religion was a grave error of judgment. To him, the advancement of practical therapy depended upon a continuous exploration of the invisible side of nature—a search for causes—and the realization that man was not simply a physical creature, but a living soul whose internal attitudes could profoundly affect his health.

The findings of Paracelsus included his discovery of hydrogen and nitrogen. He successfully developed methods for the administration of mercury in the treatment of certain diseases. He established a correlation between cretinism and endemic goiter, and introduced the use of mineral baths. The German philosopher Lessing is outspoken in his praise of Paracelsus, and his remarks summarize the attitude of many who have investigated the Paracelsian corpus. "Those who imagine that the medicine of Paracelsus is a system of superstitions which we have fortunately outgrown, will, if they once learn to know its principles, be surprised to find that it is based on a superior kind of knowledge which we have not yet attained, but into which we may hope to grow."

Paracelsus, known in his own day as the "Swiss Hermes," was born about 1490 in the Canton of Schwyz. He was burdened with a most formidable name, and at the height of his career, preferred to be referred to as Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim. This was rather too much for ordinary usage, and he is remembered simply as Paracelsus. His brief and troublous life terminated about his fifty-first year. The exact circumstances of his death are unknown. His enemies insisted that he perished as a result of his dissolute habits, but his friends stoutly contended that he was pushed off

a cliff by hired assassins in the employ of the medical fraternity. From the feeling of the time, it is quite certain that many of his fellow physicians rejoiced in his decease and were of a spirit to have contributed to its speedy consummation.

"The Hohenheimer," as he was often called, was a complete and rugged individualist. From his earliest life, he declined completely to conform with any traditional procedure. Though he lectured at the University of Basel, he held the faculty in open contempt, declaring that the soft down on the back of his neck knew more about the practice of medicine than all the professors of Basel put together. Obviously, this endeared him to his contemporaries.

In a day that was largely dominated by traditional forms, built upon the writings of Galen and Avicenna, Paracelsus departed from practically every recognized landmark of medicine. His father was an army physician, and his mother, the superintendent of a hospital. Thus he was led early to the contemplation of medicine as a profession. Gradually, however, his religious instinct deepened, and he sought guidance in the advancement of his studies in theology and philosophy. He associated himself with Trithemius, abbot of Sponheim, and Solomon Trismosin, who introduced him to the alchemistical speculations that later influenced his researches in chemistry. After leaving Sponheim, Paracelsus went to the Tirol, where he worked for some time in the mines and laboratories of the Fuggers. It was here that he developed his interest in mineral waters and became father of the now fashionable concept of spas. He discovered that the most satisfactory way to learn in his rather benighted day was to observe, and later, under suitable conditions, to experiment practically with the information which he had accumulated. He had a prodigious memory and an insatiable curiosity, and these contributed to make him one of the outstanding empiricists in the field of the sciences.

Although a devout student of the Bible, Paracelsus instinctively adopted the broad patterns of essential learning, as these had been clarified by Pythagoras of Samos and Plato of Athens. Being by nature a mystic

as well as a scientist, he also revealed a deep regard for the Neoplatonic philosophy as expounded by Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Proclus. Neoplatonism is therefore an invaluable aid to the interpretation of the Paracelsian doctrine.

Paracelsus held that true knowledge is attained in two ways, or rather that the pursuit of knowledge is advanced by a two-fold method, the elements of which are completely interdependent. In our present terminology, we can say that these two parts of method are intuition and experience. To Paracelsus, these could never be divided from each other.

The purpose of intuition is to reveal certain basic ideas which must then be tested and proven by experience. Experience, in turn, not only justifies intuition, but contributes certain additional knowledge by which the impulse to further growth is strengthened and developed. Paracelsus regarded the separation of intuition and experience to be a disaster, leading inevitably to greater error and further disaster. Intuition without experience allows the mind to fall into an abyss of speculation without adequate censorship by practical means. Experience without intuition could never be fruitful because fruitfulness comes not merely from the doing of things, but from the overtones which stimulate creative thought. Further, experience is meaningless unless there is within man the power capable of evaluating happenings and occurrences. The absence of this evaluating factor allows the individual to pass through many kinds of experiences, either misinterpreting them or not interpreting them at all. So Paracelsus attempted to explain intuition and how man is able to apprehend that which is not obvious or apparent. Is it possible to prove beyond doubt that the human being is capable of an inward realization of truths or facts without the assistance of the so-called rational faculty?

According to Paracelsus, intuition was possible because of the existence in nature of a mysterious substance or essence—a universal life force. He gave this many names, but for our purposes, the simplest term will be appropriate. He compared it to light, further reasoning that there

are two kinds of light: a visible radiance, which he called brightness, and an invisible radiance, which he called darkness. There is no essential difference between light and darkness. There is a dark light, which appears luminous to the soul but cannot be sensed by the body. There is a visible radiance which seems bright to the senses, but may appear dark to the soul. We must recognize that Paracelsus considered light as pertaining to the nature of being, the total existence from which all separate existences arise. Light not only contains the energy needed to support visible creatures, and the whole broad expanse of creation, but the invisible part of light supports the secret powers and functions of man, particularly intuition. Intuition, therefore, relates to the capacity of the individual to become attuned to the hidden side of life.

By light, then, Paracelsus implies much more than the radiance that comes from the sun, a lantern, or a candle. To him, light is the perfect symbol, emblem, or figure of total well-being. Light is the cause of health. Invisible light, no less real if unseen, is the cause of wisdom. As the light of the body gives strength and energy, sustaining growth and development, so the light of the soul bestows understanding, the light of the mind makes wisdom possible, and the light of the spirit confers truth. Therefore, truth, wisdom, understanding, and health are all manifestations or revelations of one virtue or power. What health is to the body, morality is to the emotions, virtue to the soul, wisdom to the mind, and reality to the spirit. This total content of living values is contained in every ray of visible light. This ray is only a manifestation upon one level or plane of the total mystery of life. Therefore, when we look at a thing, we either see its objective, physical form, or we apprehend its inner light. Everything that lives, lives in light; everything that has an existence, radiates light. All things derive their life from light, and this light, in its root, is life itself. This, indeed, is the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world.

Man perceives outward things by his own outward senses, and he perceives inward things by his inner senses. The heart has eyes as well as the body, and the mind has its own ears. All the internal parts of man

have appropriate senses of cognition. To each of these parts, a message can be conveyed. Such messages can come either from light, which is the force of the energy which conveys, or from the works of light upon any of the levels of the world. In the case of the physical plane, works of light are epitomized in nature, and man beholds nature because of the light shining upon it. Man can also become aware of the light of nature because of the light which shines within it, revealing itself through its powers of animation. Therefore, by observation with the physical senses, we behold things that are lighted; by intuition, we behold things self-luminous. By intuition, we are brought into contact with the inner light of creatures, even as outwardly we see only the reflection of light upon creatures. This is true of all sensory perceptions, for all of these, and not the eyes alone, depend upon light.

Paracelsus might seem to differ from the moderns, but when we understand his true meaning of light as containing the total impact of life upon creation, we see that he is dealing with an energy or principle beyond what we generally think of today. This life-light corresponds with the *mana* of the natives of the Polynesian Islands. This is a mysterious spiritual nourishment, a universal sustaining power. There is another parallel in the term *orenda*, as used by the Iroquois Indians. Orenda is the light of things, flowing out through the manifestations and functions of life, and causing us to apperceive qualities not immediately available to the profane analysis of untrained reason.

Thus we must come to recognize not only the shapes of thing—their colors, their numbers, and their arrangement—by the reflected light of nature; we must perceive the qualities of things their goodness, their beauty, their integrity—and we come to experience a certain affinity because of our own intuitive reaction to the radiant energy everywhere present. This invisible light, of which the visible part is merely a shadow or reflection, arises in the invisible source of light in the solar system, which is the spiritual or original sun, concealed behind or within the luminous orb of day.

Paracelsus, following the Neoplatonists and some other early mystics, was of the opinion that there were three suns in the solar system—one physical, one astral (or belonging to the psychic sphere), and one spiritual. These three suns bestowed the life-light of the world according to their own natures. The light of the physical sun warms and reveals the bodies of things; the light of the psychic sun nourishes and reveals the structure of the soul; and the light of the spiritual or root sun, sustains and nourishes the human spirit. These three suns, therefore, become the causes of certain qualifications within light-life energy.

By the same concept, the universe is a totality, suspended in an infinite field of spiritual light-life. All things that have existence exist within this light-energy which permeates space and, mingling with the spiritual light of other suns and other cosmic systems, fills all existence. This sea of eternal light is, in substance and essence, the luminous nature of God. We are reminded of the Pythagorean definition which describes Deity as an infinite being whose body is composed of the substance of light and whose soul is composed of the substance of truth. Truth is therefore a kind of light, and when it shines, a kind of darkness is dissipated. Truth is to the darkness of ignorance what the physical sun is to the darkness of nature. There is also a spiritual sun, and the total energy of this sun dissipates total illusion; that is, mortality or materiality. The spiritual sun is forever dispelling the kind of darkness which we call death; the psychic sun is forever dissipating the kind of darkness which we call ignorance; the physical sun is forever dissipating crystallization.

To the Neoplatonists, Paracelsus was also indebted for the concept that matter is the least degree of life. By extension of reasoning, darkness is also the least degree of light; truth, the least degree of ignorance; and reality, the least degree of illusion. Having thus envisioned a universe of total light, Paracelsus was confronted with that ancient dilemma which has so long plagued theology and philosophy. How does it happen that total power, completely unconditioned in its own nature, enters into a condition of qualification and stratification? How does the One become differentiated? And why does light assume various appearances,

benevolent or not benevolent, when combined in the compositions of created things?

For his answer, Paracelsus, factually or intuitively, had recourse to Gnosticism and its doctrine of emanations. He recognized that things in themselves always alike are caused to apparently change their qualities by their relationships. Kepler brought this out in his astronomical theories. Out of the motions or mutations of bodies, patterns are formed resulting in chemical compounds which appear balanced or unbalanced. Thus, also, in the phenomenon of the seasons on earth, the sun remains the same, the earth is unchanged, but climates and seasons change due to varying relationships.

In the Paracelsian philosophy of the universe, all mutations of energy are due to relationships, and not to the actual alteration of any energy in itself. He denied the existence of antipathetical energies. Therefore, he could not believe in the existence of a real or factual evil. He did not accept the reality of a death energy or of a destructive force. He believed, however, that certain mutations or relationships between energy foci were benevolent to one thing and not benevolent to another. Because of these mutations within the energy fields, no energy is equally benevolent to all things at all times. Thus, if we have a depletion of energy, it may appear to afflict or burden a creature because it does not meet the immediate requirements of a particular organism. There are seasons in the world of energy, even as upon the earth, for while those in northern climates are shivering from the cold, the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere are enjoying a warm and pleasant summer.

Thus we come closer to the essential problem of energy. The earth, bathed in a world of light, passes through day and night, bearing man along the road of light and darkness. The human being can never be further from or nearer to any essential principle necessary for his survival. By mutation, however, nature itself is more abundant in certain energies at certain times, and is somewhat deficient in these energies at other times. Paracelsus, as a skilled observers pointed out that in some climates there are animals which hibernate when the necessities of

existence are not available; whereas there are other animals, differently constituted, which provide in various ways for survival during seasons of sterility. Man also possesses within himself reservoirs wherein he can store up psychic and spiritual energy to preserve his life through the great psychic mutations of nature. Thus man is able to survive while energies are at their ebb.

In some of his writing, Paracelsus seems to refer, at least indirectly, to the endocrine chain in the human body. These glands—or more correctly, their magnetic fields—are important as means of storing and regulating the distribution of energy. If, however, man depletes his resources too rapidly, and this depletion occurs at a time when restoring energies are less available, he may find himself in a serious state of fatigue, exhaustion, or devitalization.

Man, together with all other living things, is bound to the total universe by energy-correspondencies. Everything that lives, whether it be a tiny organism in a drop of water, a mighty tree, a huge animal, a small herb hidden by the road side, is a focal point of universal life-energy. It is the duty of the physician to examine the celestial constellations of the sky, the terrestrial constellations upon the earth, and the physiological constellations within man. Heaven seems to have inverted itself upon the earth. For every star in the sky there is a flower in the meadow, and for each ray that comes out of space, there is an integration on every level of structure. There are mineral integrations, as well as vegetative, animal, and human integrations.

Paracelsus pointed out that the animal kingdom has a certain instinctive apperceptive power by which its creatures are able to fulfill the laws of their kind, even though they could not become learned or acquire intellectual wisdom. In the human body, every drop of blood, if permitted normal opportunity, will obey its God, keep the universal law, and function according to its proper place in the universal plan. It is only when the "harmony of the world" is disturbed or interfered with that the fruits of in-harmony must be endured.

To return for a moment to the constellations growing in the meadows. About herbs and their secret virtues, the Swiss Hermes was well informed. From old European herbalists and the wise men of Constantinople, Paracelsus had become deeply learned in the use of medicinal plants. According to his doctrine of sympathetic resemblances, all growing things reveal through their structure, form, color, and aroma, their peculiar usefulness to man. The average physician may not notice these resemblances immediately, nor be able to explain them, but simple people have discovered the healing virtues of plants by instinct or intuition. Perhaps the mind of the herbalist intuitively sensed in the design of the plant the organ of the body or the physiological process which it could benefit.

Therefore, von Hohenheim admonished the physician to search within himself for the spiritual insight by which he could recognize and even sense the energies of plants. The physician should sit quietly in the meadow, relax, and with deep faith and a prayerful heart without which none of the works of God can be accomplished open himself to the universal mystery of health. If he does this, he will perceive the stars in his own soul. He will note how little blossoms follow the motions of the planets, some to open their petals according to the phases of the moon, others by the cycle of the sun, and still others by response to the most distant stars.

Plants derive their energies from the two great sources of life in nature: the outer atmosphere and the earth beneath. The earth itself, according to Paracelsus, is not only composed of four elements, but is permeated by a peculiar kind of energy. This is captured in the earth by minerals and metals, for these are to the underworld what plants are to the surface of the earth. Paracelsus discovered some of these secrets while he was working far below the ground in the mines of the Fuggers. He gained much from personal observation, but he was also indebted to the miners who worked in the ground, and who shared with him old folklore and curious beliefs peculiar to their trades. They explained to him that minerals, like plants and animals, are born, grow, decrease with

age, and finally die. Men seeking gold, for example, may find none in a certain place, but returning years later, discover that fine threads of this precious metal have extended themselves through the ore. Instead of ridiculing such stories as mere superstitions, Paracelsus examined each report carefully and was moved to agree that mysterious things could happen for which there appeared to be no reasonable explanation.

All bodies seem to have their roots in atmosphere or space. They derive their nutrition from an invisible field of substances which is an intangible kind of earth. Thus the universe is an inverted garden, with its roots in space. This intangible atmosphere is the source of all elements and substances, and the nutritive agent which maintains the living processes. It is also the root of intelligence and emotion, and the source of certain archetypes or patterns by which species are differentiated. Various kinds of energy can be released only through creatures or beings in whose natures appropriate sympathetic polarities exist. Man's uniqueness lies in the fact that within him are poles capable of attracting countless forms of energy. Therefore, man is capable of knowing everything necessary to his own survival. He can attain to all necessary ends because the roots and seeds of universal achievements are within him.

Actually, however, on the level of function, man responds only to such energies as he can capture and hold by those polarities which he has strengthened and developed by skill and thoughtfulness. Such polarities can be of many kinds, such as mineral, nutritional, astral, psychical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. For example, an individual can never energize an emotional power which is inconsistent with the development of his own emotional nature. If, therefore, he hates, he cannot create the archetype of love by which he will participate in this noble emotion, unless he changes his own way of life. Man is always in the midst of energies, many of which are beyond his conscious understanding. Yet, gradually, through the growth of his own mind, he attains to true learning, and becomes responsive to the universal energies which sustain learning and help it to increase.

Therapy, which was always uppermost in the thinking of Paracelsus, depends upon adequate ways of conducting energy into the human body, setting up necessary poles for its reception and distribution, removing impediments to its circulation, and opposing to one energy another which will neutralize that which is not useful or necessary to human wellbeing. He early recognized the importance of nutrition. Food is not merely a physical substance; it is a medium for the transmission of life force. Several plants growing in the same soil will develop differently according to their natures. Some will have red blossoms, and others white. Some will have fragrance, and others have no odor, or possibly an objectionable one. It is the nature of the plant that determines what it takes from the soil, and it is the nature of man that determines what he will derive from universal nutrition. But this energy will help all things to grow according to their kind and constitutions. Man possesses the power to change certain parts of himself. He can become more noble or more kindly. He can engage in activities which strengthen him, or he can neglect his needs and thus diminish his proper powers.

Some energies come directly from the sun, others from outer space, and still others through those growing organisms which man transforms into food. One kind of energy generates the poison of the serpent, which appears to be dangerous to man. But we have come to know, in the course of centuries, that Paracelsus was correct that even the poison of the serpent can be useful if man can discover its utility. The human being is therefore the alchemist, and within his body, wonderful transmutations are continuously taking place. Art perfects nature, and man, the artist, has the skill to prepare the garden of his soul for the useful plants that can grow and flourish there. These psychic herbs and simples are for the healing of all sickness, both in man and in his world.

The great magician is the master of energy. He creates for it suitable instruments of expression. He calls it forth with the magic wand of his will. He reforms and regenerates his disposition, his character, and his temperament. He overcomes in himself those bad habits, negative attitudes, and false beliefs which draw to him energy that is not useful. He

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cultivates the way of God in nature, and increases in righteousness. He respects life around him; he dedicates his skills to the services of those who need. Thus he becomes truly good and pure. Having established his own consciousness in the way of wisdom, he finds that suitable energies flow into him, his good resolutions are immediately strengthened, his consecrated mind experiences new vitality. Each constructive thought brings more life to his thinking. He is responsible for his use of energy. Who uses it wisely, enjoys the blessings of God; who uses it unwisely is deprived of these blessings, and must wander in the darkness of ignorance and sickness. Only the good man can have good health, and only the wise man can be truly good.

This is not worldly wisdom, but the wisdom of God in a mystery. It is the gentle wisdom of dedication and the life of uprightness. Thus for Paracelsus, the physician is not merely a scientist, but a holy man, a servant of that wonderful fountain of life and light which flows forever from the heart of the Infinite. As this light becomes energy, it manifests its nutritive qualities, and man, living in God, is fed eternally from the very body of God. Thus living itself is a Eucharistic sacrament, a dedication to the service of immortal life.

OPPOSITE: *Paracelsus, possible from life.  
From a portrait wrongly ascribed to Tintoretto.*



## Part II: Sympathetic Forces Operating in Nature

The metaphysical and medical speculations of Paracelsus extended into so many fields, with such amazing penetration, that he is properly regarded as the father of modern therapy. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Ambrose Pare, born in 1517, has been honored as the greatest reformer in the history of surgery. Paracelsus published his work *Greater Surgery* in 1536, when Pare was about 21 years old. Pare immediately adopted the concept of von Hohenheim, and in the first edition of his own writings, published during his lifetime, acknowledged his indebtedness to Paracelsus in all that concerned the surgery of wounds. For some reason, probably arising from the feud between Paracelsus and his confreres, Pare's tribute was deliberately omitted from

the later editions of the works of this great surgeon until 1840, when it was included in the complete printing edited by M.J.F. Malgaigne.

A great part of the work of Paracelsus, both in diagnosis and the treatment of obscure ailments, was founded in his doctrine of sympathies. This word is a curious one, for it contains within it two Greek words meaning "with suffering." There is the moral implication that sympathy arises from a sharing of pain, misfortune, or tragedy. Only when we endure these things ourselves can we understand the sorrows of those around us, and respond instinctively to the needs of the afflicted. More broadly taken, the word sympathy means a certain affinity or association, a kind of intimate relationship by which whatever affects one affects, in a similar way, others in whom this sympathy exists. It is a mutual or reciprocal sensitivity arising from correspondence in qualities, proportions, properties, or harmonic elements. Perhaps of special interest is the present concept that sympathy is a correlation existing between bodies which are capable of communicating their vibrational motion to one another, usually through a medium of some kind. If such definitions of sympathy are essentially factual, and they are now broadly accepted, it would follow that a science of healing could be built upon concepts derived from those lawful operations of nature by which like attracts like, or dissimilars repulse each other.

In the Paracelsian doctrine, diseases are said to arise from one or more of five basic causes. The physician therefore must be fully aware of not only one of these causes, but of all of them, so that he may judge accurately the proportions of those factors which contribute to illness and infirmity.

( 1 ) Sidereal and astral influences, acting upon the invisible etheric or vital body of man, set in motion rates of vibration which in turn are diffused through the physical body as possible causes of imbalance or chemical conflict. Paracelsus here attempts to point out that sickness can be traced to the mutations of sidereal forces and rays, operating upon the etheric or magnetic field of the earth. This field, or atom sphere, so

conditioned, then in turn affects all creatures living within it or depending upon it for their survival.

To illustrate his concept, Paracelsus explains that the atmosphere of the earth can be likened to the water in a small pool. This water is the natural environment for fish and other marine creatures, and for plants which depend upon water for survival. The sun is the source of all life, but if its rays become so strong as to overheat the pool, the creatures living in it may be injured or even die. Also, in winter, when the power of the sun is weak, if the pool freezes to the bottom, the world of life within it will be destroyed. In the case of the earth's atmosphere, mutations caused by planets, stars, and other vibrations, some as yet unclassified, may not necessarily destroy life, nor will they operate in the same way upon all creatures. Those forms of living things, however, whose natures are in sympathy with certain energies and forces, will respond to them. If these forces are exaggerated, the responses will be exaggerated; and if these forces combine in some unhealthful pattern, creatures in sympathy with such a pattern will be disturbed and sicken, or even die.

( 2 ) Sickness may result from the introduction into the body of various impurities, poisonous or hurtful substances, even including drugs and medications for the alleviation of disease. In this category should be included also nutrition and such habits as are classified under sanitation, hygiene, and eugenics. In other words, the misuse or abuse of anything in itself good and proper will end in misfortune. Over-exertion, exposure to extremes of the elements, disregard of warning symptoms, or addiction to ill habits such as intemperance, will work hardships upon health. Paracelsus was among the first to recognize the importance of preserving normal elimination by which waste substances are prevented from accumulating within the human system. Also, there must be due regard for obstructions by which the free circulation of the vital forces of the body is impaired. Wherever obstruction is allowed to exist, areas of living tissues become toxic and die. There is, therefore, a rationale of health by which man must accept personal responsibility

for the maintenance of his physical economy with judgment, integrity, and continuing alertness to both needs and symptoms.

( 3 ) Wrong physical habits, resulting in the corruption of natural processes, will ultimately endanger life. Of such, Paracelsus wrote extensively. He mentions the overloading of the stomach with excessive food, and injury to its functions caused by excessive drinking and the use of condiments. As the reward for such total disregard for the natural laws governing nutrition and digestion, the unreasonable individual becomes dyspeptic and his entire health is threatened. Paracelsus also indicated that wrong associations among persons may injure health by inviting intemperance or creating situations in which the normalcy of conduct is in some way compromised.

Our old physician points out that nature is indeed a patient mother, and if we will correct our ways and cease our abuses, health can be restored in many cases. If, however, we continue to cater merely to appetites, no doctor can give us remedies that will really compensate for our own foolishness. Man was originally provided with instincts to care for such things, but by degrees, his mental and emotional intensities so greatly increased that he could no longer depend upon the normal demands of his appetites. He must therefore re-learn the art of normal living.

Dr. Still, in the development of his osteopathic technique, made much of the concept of internal obstructions advanced centuries earlier by Paracelsus. In order to restore health in any area, free circulation must be revived. By circulation, the remedial processes and materials are brought to the regions where they are most needed. The physician may be able to remove the obstruction, but nature must accomplish the remedy and restore health.

( 4 ) Here is an example of the true advancement of van Hohenheim's mind. Writing in the early 16th century, he declared that many diseases originate in psychological causes, and that all intemperances of the mind and emotions lead not only to the immediate discomfort of the body, but, by corrupting man's psychic nature, cause some of those ailments most

difficult to diagnose and treat. To him, imagination was a most useful but dangerous faculty or power. Nearly all negative emotions are associated with morbid imagination, such as fear, worry, doubt, confusion, and uncertainty of purpose. Out of this, also, come false judgment of others, self-pity, and a variety of psychic intensities leading to complexes and neuroses. While Paracelsus could not use the words and names now popular to describe psychic ailments, he considered them as parasites or cancerous growths attacking the soul and attaching themselves to the fields of reason and emotion. These growths, living upon the energies of man, gradually destroyed optimism, happiness, and all the constructive ideals and hopes by which the life is directed to useful and profitable ends. If the individual suffers from morbid mental or emotional preoccupations, his health will certainly be affected, and the probabilities of recuperation and the restoration of normal vitality are reduced.

While it is true that the average person does not have sufficient mental or emotional intensity to produce an immediate and dramatic example of mind over matter, the long continuance of habits produces a corrosive effect. Thus Paracelsus explained that violent emotion may cause miscarriages, apoplexies, spasms, and result in the malformation of the fetus of an unborn child. Anger can cause the appearance of jaundice; grief may so depress a function that it may result in death; whereas great joy or gaiety can stimulate sluggish functions and help to restore bodily health. Many obstructions are due to melancholia, and fear acts directly upon the functions of excretion. Nearly all persons with unreasonable dispositions or unpleasant attitudes will have trouble with digestion, assimilation, and elimination. It would seem, therefore, that Paracelsus must be accepted as setting forth substantially the concepts underlying the modern school of psychosomatic therapy.

( 5 ) There are certain diseases which have their origin in what Paracelsus termed "spiritual causes," or disobedience to the laws of God on a religious, moral, or ethical level. He does not mean, by "spiritual causes" that God is the source of sickness, but rather that conflict on the level of man's spiritual convictions can be exceedingly detrimental. It is therefore

dangerous to try to disillusion a person about spiritual values which to him are real and vital. Nor should we quickly encourage an individual to change his faith, because this must certainly result in an alteration of his entire condition, both visible and invisible. From his writings, it is obvious that Paracelsus would regard an atheist as endangering his total nature and opening himself to physical ailments due to the loss of certain ideals and overtones which help to preserve the normalcy of bodily functions. Under the same general heading would come disregard for conscience, or any action by which the individual comes to the immediate personal conclusion that he has displeased God, or has broken the laws and commandments which God has imposed upon both nature and the human soul. Spiritual sickness is spiritual confusion, the loss of directives, and the failure of those inducements to self-control by which man maintains a balance of conduct.

There seems to be a hint that Paracelsus believed in rebirth, for he implies that spiritual causes of sickness might be due to conditions which existed before birth, and these conditions must be regarded as violations of natural law through ignorance or intent. Nothing in the world happens without a cause. That which cannot be explained in reference to a present lifetime, must be referable to some antecedent causation. Paracelsus therefore says that the presence of a good physician is a miraculous indication of divine intercession; whereas the presence of a bad physician indicates that the patient does not deserve to recover. This rather sarcastic attitude probably reflects the feud between Paracelsus and his professional associates.

In a universe of energies in which everything possible is continuously occurring, Paracelsus had to explain how and why certain things happened to certain persons only at certain times. He was too much of a philosopher to accept blind chance, and too skilled a theologian to fall back upon divine providence. He had to find an answer that was morally and reasonably acceptable. This meant human acceptance of human responsibility. The law of sympathy met this need, for by it could be demonstrated that each individual attracted to himself such forces

and circumstances as he earned or deserved by his own conduct. Once a sympathetic pole was established between the person and the corresponding energy resource in nature, the means for enlarging or exaggerating the condition were always at hand. For example, if we establish a habit of a bad temper, we create a sympathetic pole in our own disposition. The more often we lose our temper, the easier it becomes to do so, and the more violent the outbursts. Ultimately, the habit takes over, and it requires a great deal of patient discipline to restore emotional control. No action can be performed without energy, and according to the way we channel this resource, our entire psychic life is affected.

Our present interest is to find, if possible, certain simple patterns by which the Paracelsian ideas can be useful to us now, and help us to justify the demands of self-improvement. Let us then see what sympathy means on the level of our common purposes and actions. When we say that people are sympathetic, we mean that they can get along together, and that they have instinctive and intuitive recognition of common values or even common problems. Furthermore, sympathetic attraction is a kind of psychic gravity by which those of similar interests or compatible ideas are brought into association, or even seek each other out, for purposes of companionship or exchange of ideas. Wherever sympathy exists, a certain intangible psychic interval is overcome. Wherever there is understanding, there is a nearness—a spiritual proximity more real than any formal relationship of marriage or blood.

To be psychically near, means qualitative similarity. Individuals can live under the same roof for a lifetime and never be really close. Others may live on the opposite sides of the earth and never actually meet; yet a psychic concord can exist between them. This seems to be demonstrated by the curious fact that nearly all important discoveries have been made simultaneously in two or three places remote from each other. Sympathy, according to Paracelsus, is a kind of magnetic force in which greater masses attract lesser bodies. Therefore, the larger mass of a quality will draw smaller quantities of the same quality toward itself, or else cause

these lesser masses to move in orbits about the larger quantity, as planets move about the sun.

The great fountain and source of all sympathy is God, because Deity represents total identity. All things existing in the broad panorama of creation have a common dependence upon Deity, and in their own natures contain the substances and essences of Deity. This is the perfect sympathy, and therefore all things in their natural states are drawn toward God. Whatever interferes with this spiritual magnetic sympathy is contrary to immediate good, and arises in man from egoism or the strength of the personal will. There is also a kind of barrier set up by bodies. Bodies cannot become identical, but the essences within them can attain this common unity. Bodies meet together to form masses in which the number of the parts is increased. Essences uniting together neither increase nor decrease the sum of essence, inasmuch as the essence itself is eternal, and is ever of the same quantity. Thus essences united simply make available the presence of the divine power which is ever resident in them, and creatures uniting themselves with essence also gain a participation in the substance of God.

In nature, sympathetic attraction of things always manifests as like attracting like. This is true spiritually, philosophically, emotionally, psychologically, and materially. This attraction, however, has both a benevolent and dangerous aspect. If like attracts like, attraction is primarily upon the level of vibration. Things of similar vibration are drawn toward each other, either inwardly or outwardly, sometimes both. Sympathy continually pulls things together; antipathy pushes them apart. Sympathy operates through understanding; antipathy through misunderstanding. Wisdom is a uniting power; ignorance a separating force. Virtue brings man into sympathy with all that is virtuous; whereas vice attracts that which is similar to itself.

If, therefore, like attracts like, we must assume that such destructive tendencies as we may possess will draw destructive energies. Growth is a kind of energy calling upon the energy like itself for the continuous substantiation and expansion of its own existence. One of the most

powerful factors in sympathy is motivation. Whatever be the motive behind an impulse to attract, becomes the most powerful of all overtones, determining largely the outcome of the entire project. Attraction is usually due to either the unconscious or conscious exercise of the will. Thus the attractional sympathy may be an instinctive wish toward fulfillment, or a conscious and purposed determination to attain fulfillment. Paracelsus points out that the result of a certain action may be so completely changed by motive that something apparently virtuous can lead to tragedy because the motive is wrong. Very few persons analyze their own motives with sufficient care to be certain that they are right and proper. Because of this, conditions arise which cause confusion and disillusionment. Someone may say, "I did right, why should I suffer?" The answer must lie in motivation, for all right action must be rightly motivated if its merits are to have their complete effect upon living.

Paracelsus, like Buddha, recognized certain reservoirs of energy available to human beings for their various purposes and activities. If, for example, the individual permits himself to become hateful, he creates a sympathetic relationship between himself and all others who hate, all things regarded as hateful, and that kind of energy by which only hatefulness can be sustained. He therefore immerses himself in an etheric sea of hate; and may well drown in it if he is not careful. A still more common form of psychic emotional excess is anger. The power to be angry resides in the existence of a kind of energy of anger. This is not only available, but is accumulative. The anger of the ages is available to each person who becomes angry. Having set up a sympathetic polarity, he opens his inner life to a tidal wave of discordant pressures.

It may well be that his moral nature will intercede, and he will restrain himself from the total expression of rage. If, however, his own resources are weak, his self-control poor, and his spiritual values inadequate, he may have no resources with which to combat the anger surging within him. To align oneself with the storehouse of anger in the astral light, is to cut oneself off from all contrary sympathetic resources. The person enters a state of antipathy against peace, harmony, kindness, and justice.

As these are natural and constructive emotions, and their practice is essential to bodily health, the psychic life is impoverished.

Obviously, anger does not immediately destroy all other functions, nor does it interfere with every activity of the human psyche. If such should be the case, the angry man might die instantly. Factually, however, he is only uncomfortable for a while. His digestion is disturbed, his clarity of thought interrupted, and he experiences unusual fatigue and perhaps a spell of psychic repentance. But as Paracelsus explains it, could this burst of energy expended in anger be made visible to us as a phenomenon of the energy field in which we exist, we might see it blaze out in a tremendous combustion of destructive psychic power. It would be almost like an atomic blast, and the radiation and fallout, in the case of man's anger, are measured in the destructive effect to be observed in the structure and function of his body. All excess, mental or emotional, is paid for by depletion somewhere in the compound body of man. The moment balance is lost, health is lost. Of sovereign importance, also, must be the realization that, as far as the human economy is concerned, there is no such thing as righteous indignation. Like atomic energy, anger is no respecter of persons. Laws broken exact their penalties because we live in a universe governed by immutable principles.

Conversely, a person of great kindness, affection, or sincere regard, comes in sympathy with the total field of appropriate natural energies. These, released through the psychic nature of a noble human being, not only enrich that person; but, extending outward from him, provide benevolent influences to all who are sympathetically able to receive or accept them. Kindliness calls upon the total availability of kindly life, drawing energy of its own quantity and quality, attracting according to the intensity of the demand, and resulting in an appropriate enlargement or enrichment. Paracelsus notes that all energy fields which are in themselves constructive are vitalizing; whereas all that are destructive are ultimately devitalizing. It may happen that in a moment of great appreciation, we strongly energize our love of beauty, especially when we are in the presence of some person or thing which is beautiful or

excites our admiration. This causes a powerful psychic energy-center which will attract esthetic energy. This is essentially good, beautiful, and true. Such energy, therefore, will support, and be sympathetic with, all other constructive energies in the compound nature of man. Thus we hear an individual say that after reading a beautiful poem or looking at an exquisite picture, he feels better. His entire nature has been invigorated because a highly constructive energy has been released through his psychic appreciation.

This gives us another basic rule. All sympathetic energies which are essentially good have this good in common, and are therefore sympathetic with each other. Religion is compatible with fine art, philosophy with music, ethics with esthetics, love with friendship, understanding with kindness, and the like. On the other hand, all negative or destructive energies are not only antipathetical toward good, but toward each other. Therefore, they continue to cause confusion. The man who is totally bad is also totally confused because his various vices are themselves incompatible. Incompatibility, in this case also affects the health, for wherever there is psychic confusion, there is tension, and this interferes with function and contributes to the obstruction of the flow of life through the body.

Paracelsus gives a peculiar but interesting moral or spiritual reason for integrity. The moment we depart from integrity, we do so because we are mentally or emotionally energizing negative fields. Thus we create polarities and irreconcilable centers of conflict. These, moving within us, form further destructive patterns until chaos results. The true purpose of religion is that man should be good, but this goodness is much more than a theological platitude. It means that the person shall be in order; that there shall be no conflict to divide his internal resources, and that he is maintaining only such sympathies as will unite him to his God and his fellow man.

Sympathies exist not only between man and the creatures around him, but between man and the universe, and the great spiritual center of light-life that is at the source of all things. Under certain conditions, man

comes into an almost immediate awareness of the true nature of Divinity. This is called the mystical experience, and according to Paracelsus, this is really an experience of sympathy. By his longings, by the sincere dedication of his soul, and by his resolute determination to cultivate the experience of God in his own conduct, the human being becomes capable of a strong sympathetic bond with Deity. As the result of the spiritual polarity established in himself, the devout person therefore becomes aware of the Deity in himself. By the conduct of goodness, the good in space is invoked in the likeness and similitude of God.

If, therefore, we would know anything, we must be like that which we desire to know. We attain this likeness by experiencing, or by sharing in, a quality. Understanding arises not from intellection, but from sympathetic rapport. It is our duty in our quest for wisdom to know things according to their own natures or essences, and not their appearances. When we accomplish this, we not only have a greater respect for life, but have that kind of wisdom which enables us to cooperate voluntarily with life-processes rather than the procedures of death.

The misfortunes from which we suffer are due to ignorance about laws, energies, and principles, and the failure of conduct to preserve the individual against his own weaknesses and excesses. Here is where the physician must become an educator. He is searching for a pattern which can bestow total health. This means he must provide man with an understanding and a technical procedure by which he can remain well, and by which he can so wisely administer the forces around him that they can never turn upon him in search of vengeance. Nature avenges herself upon those who break her rules. The instrument of this vengeance is magnetic sympathy, and from the infallible operations of this machinery, no one can escape. The only solution is to so live and conduct one's affairs that only the benevolent forces of nature are set in operation.

OPPOSITE: *From Stoddart's Paracelsus*  
*After an original painted in Nuremberg about 1530.*



### Part III: Fundamentals of Metaphysical Healing

In formal histories of medicine, it is customary to orient Paracelsus as the last of the great medieval doctors and the first modern physician. He was bound to the past by his numerous metaphysical, magical, and talismanic theories; but he was also a man far ahead of his time in his chemical researches, his ideas of hygiene and eugenics, and his emphasis upon psychotherapy, diet, biochemistry, and sanitation. He may also be considered as one of the last great philosophers of medicine, and a staunch supporter of the use of religion in the treatment of disease.

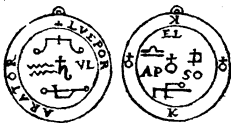
According to Paracelsus, sickness always arises from disobedience to the divine or natural laws which relate to health. He assured both his

*LIBRI PRIMI ARCHIDOXIS MAGI-  
ca Sigilla, à superioribus variantia.*

*Für die Fallende Sucht.*  
Pag. 546.



*Zu Erhaltung des Besiches.*  
Pag. 547.



*Zum Stenschwinden/ u*  
Pag. 547.



*Contra Paralyfin,*  
Pag. 547.



*Für den*

*From Opera. Strassburg. 1616. Paracelsian Talismans  
The symbols used on these medical charms are cabalistic formulas.*

friends and enemies, however, that he was not a perfectionist, nor inclined to condemn anyone who, for one reason or another, had failed to maintain his energies and functions. It was his observation, unburdened with complaint, that the loss of health is due to a falling away from the necessary harmony by which the human being shares in a universal life-principle. As long as he remains harmoniously adjusted to this principle, he cannot be sick, if we except injuries and accidents.

There are many ways by which a person may deprive himself of nature's benevolence. He may disobey the rules of health because of ignorance, which is unfortunate but not reprehensible. He may be the victim of superstition, which causes him to cling to false doctrines or suffer from the popular prejudices of the medical profession. He may lack the courage to face emergencies. For example, he may delay having his ailments diagnosed because he fears the verdict. He may also be under a pressure of conditions which impel him to sacrifice his own well-being in the service of something or someone which he regards as greater or more important than himself.

If disobedience to natural law arises from spiritual motivation, from heroic resolution, or dedication to the service of God or man, the individual will be rewarded by internal consolation; but this cannot save him from the physical consequences of neglecting his body, disregarding his needs, or living contrary to the rules governing the distribution of universal energy. Paracelsus held it to be a fundamental principle of medicine that once sickness has endangered the bodily economy, every possible and reasonable means, scientific or unscientific, should be made available to the patient, to assure and hasten his recovery. One of the first factors in the restoration of health is a firm and simple faith. He affirmed that faith was a real and vital aid to health, and insisted that faith-healing was as scientific as any other form of therapy. While it may not be so regarded by many practitioners, it is a scientific fact in nature; otherwise it could not be successful. With faith strengthening the internal resolution of the patient, he becomes receptive and hopeful,

and the tranquillizing effect of such attitudes is better and less dangerous than relaxing drugs or sleeping potions.

Faith helps the patient to overcome resentment toward his ailment or the causes to which it may be ascribed. Patience makes a good patient. By natural believing and a simple, genuine optimism, the sick person places himself psychologically in the keeping of powers and energies greater than himself. He seeks to understand them; he accepts them as the ministers of a divine purpose; and having in this way relaxed the tension and fear which ailments bring, he may even recover without medication. If he still requires treatment, he can cooperate genuinely with the physician, and allow the remedies to accomplish their maximum results. Paracelsus said that it is the first duty of the medication to overcome the disposition of the patient. The modern tendency in medicine to treat persons rather than diseases is an extension of the Paracelsian concept. Between the doctor and the disease, the sick man himself often acts as a barrier to his own recovery. If he is cynical and critical, if he doubts both the physician and his remedy, or regards himself as a victim of some complicated injustice, he will not react well but will be reluctant to accept advice and will not remain under medical guidance after the first symptoms have been alleviated. Such attitudes lock the magnetic field of the body and restrict the flow of those vital energies upon which recovery depends.

Paracelsus therefore explains to us, in his own way and in the language of his time, that many ailments begin in tension, and that any device which will reduce or remove tension is valid therapy. He therefore emphasizes the healing power of prayer, which he also regards as a scientific fact. Prayer is a positive and objective statement of conviction, and is naturally associated with a strong and sufficient faith. In prayer, thoughts of words stimulate the mind and the emotions with noble sentiments, and encourage the realization that God is the Great Physician. If, for any reason, a man has separated himself from communion with Deity, he must achieve a proper reconciliation. When this is accomplished, a larger measure of relaxation is possible. Convinced of the healing power

of the Divine Mercy, the devout person becomes expectant, watching eagerly and hopefully for the signs of heavenly grace. This is far better than allowing the mind to brood upon its negative symptoms, or to be hyper-observant of the inroads of the disease, leading to the total loss of optimism.

Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds help to maintain health or restore it if it has been lost. Recognizing the importance of man's spiritual nature, Paracelsus clearly states that it is according to the Will of nature that each human being shall in time become his own physician. We depend upon others because we lack wisdom and understanding. If another man can attain to the knowledge by which he can assist our recovery, we may likewise attain to that knowledge. While it requires much training, and specialized research to restore the sick preventive medicine is not nearly so complicated. While there may always be need for scientific guidance, such need will be the exception rather than the rule. By the integration of his life around constructive and natural procedures, the average person will enjoy a greater measure of good health than he at present regards as possible.

It was the opinion of von Hohenheim that the adverse effects of tension or stress may first be noted in those bodily functions associated with digestion assimilation, and excretion. If these processes are disrupted, the body becomes toxic, and the individual slowly poisons himself. Toxin, in turn, contributes to the problem of obstruction. If this is permitted to continue without adequate correction, the flow of energy is impeded. The vital essence of life moves through the body not only by way of the physical structure, but by means of a vital etheric counterpart which is called the vital vehicle. Through this vehicle flow countless tiny streams of semi-fluidic energy. The common experience of an arm or leg going to sleep because the normal circulation is temporarily impaired, results from the obstruction of the vital body. As this returns to its normal relationship with the physical member, there is a prickling sensation, and sometimes minor discomfort.

Paracelsus believed that when a limb is amputated, its etheric double remains with the person, and that it also continues to have a sympathetic association with the dismembered part. He gives an example where an amputated leg was put in a wooden box and buried in the ground. The patient continued to report discomfort where the leg had been. Finally, the box was unearthed and opened, and it was found that a nail used to fasten the lid had penetrated the severed leg. The nail was removed, and the patient no longer suffered discomfort. Lord Nelson also wrote that he felt pain in his own amputated arm for years, and when in the dark, often had the feeling that the arm was still present.

Realizing that mankind in general was not yet wise enough to preserve or restore health by spiritual means alone, Paracelsus advanced one of his best-known medical theories. He said that because of the infinite love of the Creator, there was an immediate and available remedy in nature for every in-harmony of the human flesh. While some of these have not yet been discovered, the search must continue until proper medications of a non-destructive nature have been found for all physical ills. The tendency of the physician is to overlook natural remedies because they are too obvious and too simple. If he had cultivated his intuitive power as well as his analytical faculties, therapy would have advanced more rapidly. If there be energy in everything, suitable to all needs, then there must be one basic energy or principle of life. This is the mysterious "Blood of the Messiah," the very life-power of God. All energy, therefore, in any of its myriad forms, is essentially sacred. It is sacred because no human being can ever become its master. The only way the individual can fully participate in this life-force is by controlling; himself, not by controlling the energy.

Nutrition involves the procedure of sustaining the body of a creature by feeding it the bodies of other creatures. Energy derived from food is not actually due to the digestion of a physical substance. All bodies exist because they are focal points of energy. This is also true of medications. They set up poles which draw energy of a certain kind, according to the specific nature of the remedy. All such remedies operate only within

fields of suitability. A remedy given at the wrong time, or to the wrong person, though indicating the treatment of an ailment, may fail to accomplish the desired purpose.

Paracelsus also gave some thought to the preparation of foods and drugs. He pointed out the danger of preparing them in ways that would damage or destroy the energy-focus. He would therefore have been strongly against the de-naturing of foods, the over-refinement of products, and the use of by-products from which most of the essential virtues have already been removed. To burden the body with adulterated substances was to permit malnutrition to arise in the presence of abundance. On the other hand, he admitted that it might be possible to reduce the gross substances of foods, so that their essences could be more immediately assimilated and produce more rapid results.

Man himself is not a simple organism, for within his body are creatures belonging to several kingdoms of nature. Within him are mineral, plant, and animal organisms, and nutrition must provide each of these groups with the energy necessary for its survival. Units of nutrition are like seeds having various layers surrounding their energy-cores. Thus Paracelsus said that the body-energy of the seed feeds man's body; the soul-energy of the seed, man's soul; and the spirit energy of the seed, the spirit-energy field of man. Unwise tampering with foods, which in their natural forms meet all reasonable requirements, may thus unbalance their nutritional value, supplying one part of the body, but denying nourishment to another part.

Realizing that the prime purpose of therapy is to supply a particular energy at a particular time to a particular part of a body, Paracelsus did not hesitate to consider magical and sympathetic means of achieving his cures. In harmony with many ancient writers, he was convinced that many metaphysical practices could be used with success, especially when more conservative methods are ineffective. He thus prepared a group of talismanic remedies. A talisman is a magical formula or symbol, usually written upon paper or parchment or engraved into the surface of some metal or gem. Paracelsus highly favored metallic talismans resembling

rather closely the familiar medals of saints, which are still regarded by many as having spiritual power.

These medical medals were cast from various alloys or pure metals, as gold, silver, iron, copper, and the like. The work was done under the conjunctions and aspects of planets, according to the phases of the moon, or with special ceremonies of consecration. The inscriptions and devices upon them were derived from the most sacred sources, including the magical writings attributed to Solomon, King of Israel. In some cases, talismans were designed particularly for a special patient, but often they were kept in readiness in the same way that drugs were available from the compounding of prescriptions. When Paracelsus observed that a patient was suffering from a particular debility, he would prescribe one of these talismans which was to be worn by the patient, usually over the heart, for the purpose of attracting sidereal energies from space and focusing them within the magnetic field of the sick person. Small amounts of magnetic metals and other materials were also administered internally, often in the form of powders to dissolve in wine. Recent experiments with the therapeutic properties of meteoric iron and the elixir of gold seem to sustain the Paracelsian concept.

Discovering that plants and shrubs growing in various regions, as upon high mountains, or where the earth is strongly impregnated with metals, absorbed special qualities, he selected even his most common remedial plants with the utmost care. Thus he might have several varieties of the same plant, carefully labeled as to the time and region associated with their gathering. While he was ridiculed for such practices, his adversaries were forced to admit that he attained extraordinary success where orthodox methods had been ineffectual.

The Swiss Hermes fashioned a ring of antimonium. Upon it he caused sacred signs to be placed. This he wore when treating the sick. When he observed certain symptoms, he would place this ring on the finger of the patient. On one occasion, it has been testified, the ring drew the poisons from the body so rapidly that it seemed to melt and literally fell from the finger of the sick person in a semi-dissolved condition. In his search

for curious remedies, Paracelsus made several discoveries which were far out of the thinking of his time. He presented an idea to the professors of medicine at the University of Basel which horrified them. Von Hohenheim told them flatly that the excrements of the human body contained powerful remedial agencies, and that this field should be thoroughly explored. Such research, however, held slight charm for distinguished savants who would not even contaminate themselves by taking the pulse of a sick man, but employed a secretary for the purpose.

If bodily health is endangered by deficiencies which Paracelsus sought to correct by means of his magical devices, why do such deficiencies exist in the human constitution? Both imbalance and deficiency are traceable to several causes, some internal and others environmental. Unhealthful attitudes dominate the internal group, and unhealthful environment, the external group. Man, exposed to the intemperances of his own living and the dangers and uncertainties of his surroundings, is subject to countless injuries. Paracelsus did not believe that most diseases are hereditary, or that sickness must usually follow exposure to contagious disease. The degree of susceptibility to different ailments is determined by imbalance and deficiency. Man may inherit a tendency to the ailments of his forebears because he has also derived his body from his parents, but he could not inherit energies deficient in themselves. If, therefore, parents have reason to suspect that they have a predisposition to certain ailments, they should immediately protect their children in every way possible. The diet should be rich in those elements which will tend to build up deficient areas and neutralize such imbalance as might be expected under the circumstances. Care in this respect may assure that the child will be completely free of the debilities of preceding generations. Mental stress can also be communicated, so that tensions perpetuate themselves not by heredity, but by association. If no effort is made to break these vicious circles, they may continue for several generations.

Paracelsus believed there was a remedy for every human ill, and was convinced that all things in nature are useful and benevolent in some way. That which is meat to one thing is poison to another. All substances

are of themselves good, unless they are distorted or disturbed through the interference of man's mind and emotion. It is therefore not necessary to destroy what is not useful to man; rather we must find the proper use for everything, for by so doing, we maintain the balance of nature, which in turn is the greatest cause and source of protection for ourselves energy patterns are eternal and energy contains within it a wonderful richness of nutrition. Diseases are entities or beings of some kind. They are not merely names or temperatures, or outbreaks upon the skin, or the disarrangement of functions. During the days of Paracelsus, Europe was plagued with periodic visitations of terrible pestilences. None knew where they came from, nor could any tell what happened when their fury was exhausted and they appeared to depart. For example, what happens to the attack of measles after you get well? We already know that measles is a name for a widespread ailment which asserts itself in various locations, and attacks particularly certain age groups. Obviously, measles are of very little practical use to man except in maintaining certain systemic processes which, in the long run, contribute to human economy. We have no way of knowing, however, how measles as an ailment can ultimately be eliminated.

Our present program in all such difficulties is to try to create immunities. Yet there must be in nature, according to Paracelsus something that needs the measles, some form of life to which this peculiar kind of energy could be of the greatest value and service. He uses this merely as an example, perhaps a homely and insufficient one. What he is really trying to tell us is that the mind of man makes it possible for the human being to become an orderer of nature. Man, dedicated to the search for truth, can find the real and appropriate place for all things, and can labor to put these things in their proper order.

The concept that a disease is a metaphysical entity has not endeared Paracelsus to the medical profession. He defends his belief, however, with considerable logic. If we understand by an entity something similar to a psychological complex, we must acknowledge that it is some kind of an energized organism. Diseases develop through orderly sequences of

symptoms, attack various parts of the body, and some of them seem to survive, like parasites, by devouring the very flesh which they have assailed. In epidemical disease, it has been pointed out that man is relatively powerless if he cannot curb the epidemic at an early stage. The great cycles of plagues were not cured or terminated by medical skill. They exhausted themselves, and disappeared as suddenly as they had appeared. Paracelsus believed that some of them, at least, were due to mutations of the atmosphere, configurations of planets, and broad psychic disturbances, such as might arise from war, panic, or fanaticism. Negative and destructive attitudes and emotions held in common by vast numbers of persons, may generate artificial organisms, or supply polarities through which invisible super-mundane creatures may gain access into the theater of human affairs. The idea appears at first fantastic, but will no longer amaze the modern world with its addiction to science-fiction.

Deriving certain inspiration from the records of the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, Paracelsus experimented with phases of optical therapy. He assumed it to be possible that remedies could be devised which could be taken into the body through the eyes, or, for that matter, through the ears. A man listening to good advice may find his health improved, as the result of what he has heard, if he will follow the recommendations. Under this heading, also, would be music therapy, religious ritual, sacred chants and mantrams. Therapy through the eyes has been noted in the constructive effect of great art, and through living in a cultured, artistic atmosphere in which harmonious surroundings contribute to contentment. More technically may be mentioned the Egyptian belief that each of the basic symmetrical geometric solids had therapeutic power when seen or meditated upon. Here symbolism exercises a remedial power; forms, designs, arrangements, and patterns, capture and hold energy. This is no more than an extension again of the Pythagorean formula that if man can produce or construct a completely perfect form, it will convey back to him, through his sensory perceptions, a powerful energy for the restoration of his own normalcy. The Greeks went further, recognizing the therapeutic value of the dance, the theater, and architecture. All

mathematical sequences, proportions, designs, colors, arrangements, and tones, can be elements of a grand cosmic therapy. The art is to distinguish clearly the proper tones or forms to apply in particular instances. Such a quest is endless, but its difficulties in no way deny its reality.

Our great physician visited Constantinople, where he gained considerable knowledge of transcendental magic from the Arabs, whose researches had not been blocked by theological restrictions. From them, Paracelsus learned the effects of various designs, tones, and movements upon the human mind. He further discovered the possibility of a direct transfer of mental energy from the physician to the patient. This is not mental healing, in the popular sense of the word, but rather the direct stimulation of particular functions, by focusing mental energy as one might focus light through a lens. By the power of will and mind, functions can be stimulated, at least temporarily. Paracelsus believed that this was not purely suggestion or auto-suggestion, but a native power resident in man, available to the physician, but not generally studied. He also recognized the dangers which would result from the misuse of such power, whereby mental magic could degenerate into mental sorcery. He therefore held that such power should be available only to the most dedicated physician, one entirely beyond selfish or ulterior motives, a true servant of God and nature.

It is also reported that while in Constantinople, Paracelsus was instructed in the mysteries of alchemy, and secured from the Near-Eastern savants the wonderful stone, Azoth, which he carried in the hilt of his sword. One of the principal ends of alchemy was the compounding of the universal medicine. Paracelsus made use of alchemical terms quite frequently in his writings but not always in a conventional way. He seems to have had a special interpretation of Hermetic chemistry, but he did recognize the principle of transmutation. This means literally the regeneration of chemicals, minerals, substances, and elements. In each, a process occurred by which the soul, or inner life, was liberated from the gross parts to become a pure essence, in this way becoming compatible with all pure essences. Such alchemical medicines were particularly

suitable to the transformation of man's inner life. They strengthened his spirit and made possible the victory of consciousness over matter. This process, also, Paracelsus affirmed to be completely scientific, free of all metaphysical speculation and vagary. It depended upon man's discovering the essential nature of each substance, and assisting this substance to the perfection of itself. Such perfected substances in turn became available as medicines to restore the harmony and equilibrium of troubled bodies, hearts, and minds.

One of the most fabulous of the Paracelsian remedies was his *mumiae*, a substance originally derived from the mummified remains of the Egyptian dead. Later, however, the concept was extended to certain materials which served as energy-magnets. They could draw toxins of many kinds from the body to themselves, as the lodestone attracts iron. Once permeated with the vibration of a disease, the *mumiae* could be taken away and brought into contact with some organism which, for the preservation of its own life, could assimilate the vital forces detrimental to man. For some reason, Paracelsus regarded with extreme anxiety the idea of simply attempting to destroy a disease. Perhaps he regarded it as having a kind of immortality. If taken from one body and not provided with a new habitat, it might continue in the atmosphere and attach itself to some innocent person. Oriental magic includes such beliefs, and in certain forms of demonism, it was necessary to find for an evil spirit some place where it could reside. Thus, in the Bible, demons driven from men were transferred to a herd of swine. Reasoning from his favorite concept that everything was useful for something, Paracelsus sought to achieve a universal benefit, even as he treated the sick.

The concept of sympathy immediately suggests the concept of antipathy. If certain things are drawn together by similarities, other things may be strongly bound by their dissimilarities and antagonisms. By opposing motives, a man may be as dependent upon his enemies as upon his friends, and one may influence him as much as the other. Therapeutically speaking, sympathy consists in supporting like with like, or nourishing the good by supplying it with more like itself. Antipathetical medicine

consists in neutralizing a negative force by balancing it with something equally antagonistic to itself.

Here, Paracelsus made use of the old rules of astrology, as these especially apply to astro-therapy. The two malefic planets known at that time, Mars and Saturn, believed to be associated with iron and lead respectively, represented the polarities of stimulation and crystallization. Plants, herbs, minerals, and metals under the rulership of Mars, were therefore used to combat ailments under the rulership of Saturn, and vice versa. This opened an interesting concept of therapy. Assuming that certain aspects of planets were involved in the appearance of diseases in the body by providing a situation suitable to the inroads of that disease, it seemed obvious to our ancestors to devise appropriate remedies. This was done by capturing the rays of sympathetical or antipathetical planets and stars, as the need might indicate, and making these available to the sick.

On his estate at Hohenheim, Paracelsus captured dew on plates of glass. He gathered this dew under various configurations of the heavenly bodies, believing the water to carry within itself the energy of these planetary combinations. This impregnated dew he gave to his patients, and was highly satisfied with the results which he obtained. It is easy to doubt the validity of his practice, but it should not be condemned without investigation, for he may have hit upon an unsuspected truth. Much as in the case of the dew, mistletoe and orchids, because they seem to live upon the atmosphere, were regarded as gatherers of sidereal forces. The old Druids realized the secret powers of the mistletoe, which they gathered on sanctified cloths, never permitting the mistletoe to touch the earth because this would drain off its atmospheric virtue.

Throughout the Paracelsian corpus, it is noted that this great physician familiarized his mind with the folklore and beliefs of every group of healers with which he could come in contact. He discarded no remedy brought to his attention without first experimenting with its virtues, and analyzing the theoretical explanation of its properties. By this systematic

endeavor, he made many real and vital contributions to the pharmacopoeia. He was long ridiculed for his gullibility, but in recent years he has been more than vindicated. It is not uncommon these days to read of recognized scientific groups traveling into some distant or savage region to study the remedial practices of witch doctors and medicine men. In summary, therefore, it will be noted that Paracelsus combined empirical attitudes with ancient lore, bringing them into compatibility with a devout religious nature which recognized the omnipresence of divine energy and life. He sought to restore health by natural means, so that it would not be necessary for the sick first to recover from the ailment and later recover from the cure.



## Part IV: Invisible Creatures of the Elements

Paracelsus gained enduring distinction as a patron of forlorn causes. He advanced and defended beliefs, opinions, and doctrines unpopular in his own day and even less acceptable to the mind of the 20th Century. 16th Century Europe is now regarded as superstition-ridden, and doctrines then held as valid subjects for scientific consideration have been totally rejected, or at least allowed to languish in dignified oblivion. As we have noted before, Paracelsus chose to gather his friends and acquaintances from among the peasantry. He liked to visit hermits living in huts and caves, and to explore the myths and legends of the gypsies, alchemists, herbalists, and even magicians and sorcerers. He was convinced that the folk-beliefs flourishing in isolated regions had valid origin and meaning for those who had the wit and wisdom to examine them

with open and charitable attitudes. We are inclined today to agree with Paracelsus, accepting ancient symbols and ideas not as mere inventions, fabrications, or delusions, but as revealing the deeper phases of human consciousness, much as we regard dreams and visions as testimony to the inner life of the individual.

All over the world, people of every race and class, and belonging to many levels and degrees of intelligence, have affirmed the reality of creatures in nature other than those with which we are commonly acquainted. The mythologies of the Persians, Mongolians, Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, and Egyptians, abound with accounts of spirits, benevolent or malevolent, who occasionally involve themselves in the affairs of ordinary mortals. The Greeks had their nymphs and *dryades*, sprites of fountain and forest. The ancient Druids had their tree-spirits, inhabiting the sacred groves, and the Teutonic tribes never questioned the reality of the Nibelungen folk—gnomes and earth-dwarfs who guarded lost treasures. Although Paracelsus never reached Ireland, he would have found there the same respect for leprechauns, who pegged shoes in forest glades, and fairies, like the airy people of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who held court in meadows, and whose dances caused fairy rings of bright flowers.

Of course, Paracelsus did not actually invent his explanations relating to elementals and elementaries. He merely adapted them from the writings of the Egyptians and other learned nations of the ancient world. On one occasion, Socrates, desiring to discourse with his disciples, chose a certain shaded and secluded place because the spirits that inhabited it would contribute to the dignity and richness of the occasion. Iamblichus, in his work on the Mysteries, mentions attending spirits, some of which are associated with a person from his birth and become his protectors. This concept, which returns in Christian theology as the Guardian Angel, is not regarded as contrary to the doctrines of the Church.

Paracelsus was a devout man, and drew much of his inspiration from the Bible and early commentaries thereon. He was therefore not a stranger to the Scriptures or the miracles and mysterious appearances

which they set forth. He came to the conclusion that the subject of sub-mundanes, or nonhuman beings in nature, did not conflict with the orthodox inclinations of pious persons. In the *Archidoxis*, he tells us that there are two kinds of substances in nature—two kinds of bodies—which he quaintly describes when he says “there is a flesh from Adam and there is also a flesh that is not from Adam.” He goes on to say that Adamic flesh is composed of the mingling of the four basic elements that were known to the ancients. We must bear in mind that our modern theory of elements is far more complicated than the older concept. The four elements of the ancients were earth, water, fire, and air, and the flesh of Adam is composed of a mingling of these four elements. Thus, in the human body, there is a physical or mineral part, a vegetative or humid part, a fiery principle, sustaining warmth and motion, and an airy or gaseous principle, often related to the structure of the intellect. Thus the human body is made up of solids, liquids, gases, and a fiery principle.

Some of the Cabalists held that the four rivers described in Genesis as flowing out of the Garden of Eden, represented the streams of energy sustaining the four primordial elements. These elements, again, were symbolized by the four fixed signs of the zodiac: Taurus the Bull, representing earth; Scorpio the Scorpion, representing water; Leo the Lion, representing fire; and Aquarius, sometimes called the Water-bearer, an electrical kind of fluid associated with the spirit of air. These elements later became identified with the four corners of the world, and in Christianity, with the four Apostles or Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In art, these Evangelists were often pictured accompanied by the fixed signs of the zodiac.

Man, descending from Adam and receiving his body from the Adamic flesh, lives in four elementary spheres at the same time. He has dominion over these elements, with the power to control, integrate, and arrange them, and he also possesses within himself what is called in alchemy the quintessence, or the fifth essence. This is a psychic spiritual energy, superior to the elements, by the agency of which these elements can be bound and unbound, held together in conformity with the laws

governing the human creation. This quintessence, or fifth power, was known to both the Pythagoreans and the Paracelsians as the soul, which permeated the flesh of Adam, ensouled him, so that he became indeed a living being.

Paracelsus explains that we come to know the elements because we have a certain experience of them through our sensory perceptions and our intellectual powers. We know that the earth extends beneath our feet; we can touch solid substances and know them to have structure, weight, shape, and size. Bodies grow from the earth, and the more corporeal parts of these bodies are of the earth-earthy, like the trunk of a tree or the bones of animals. Such forms belong to the physical element of earth; they are derived from it, and ultimately they return to it again. Man is also sustained and supported by liquids, which together the ancients called the *water element*. The human being can live much longer without food than without water. Yet this very water which preserves him, and of which his body is largely composed, can also destroy him; that is, he can drown or become *dropsical* in his own flesh. Man must also possess the principle of heat or fire in order to exist, and Paracelsus believed that the heat-radiating center in the body was the liver. Without heat, man must die, but with too much heat, he can also be consumed. So fire is both a friendly and a dangerous element. The last of these elements is air, and without this, man can survive only a few moments. He discovers his indebtedness when he climbs to a high altitude and experiences difficulty because of the rarified atmosphere. He lives within air as the fish lives within water, and the pressure of air upon his body is likewise essential to his survival.

Paracelsus resolved to explore the mysteries of these four elements, through the cooperation of which man lives and moves and has his being: He decided that these elements are not merely substances heaped together, or stratified, or aggregated for the simple convenience of man. Each has an existence apart from man. Every element has its own boundaries, its own laws and rules, and each contributes to the maintenance of compound structures because of an internal virtue or energy-factor.

Such elements, therefore, are indeed rivers of life, and man, in order to retain his physical economy must preserve the balance of these elements in his body at all times, which he does by means of nutrition and even the introduction of talismans and magical formulas.

Elements are not always visible, nor is man able to solve their mystery completely by merely observing their effects in his own life. Fire, for example, is a spontaneous element arising here, disappearing there, blazing forth from the volcano or from the striking of flint and steel. A fire may disappear, burn out, leaving only cold embers, but the principle or spirit of fire remains, and it may be conjured into manifestation by those requiring its assistance. Each of the elements, in the Paracelsian theory, is actually a kind of a world—a sphere interpenetrating the spheres of the other elements, yet possessing qualities of its own. Thus there are four spheres: earth the most visible, physical and fixed; water—physical but mutable; fire—sometimes visible in combustion, and more mutable; and finally air—usually invisible, and to be discovered, as in the case of wind, when it causes some physical thing to move, like the swaying of branches or the filling of a sail. All physical elements are therefore two-fold, possessing a causal nature, essentially invisible, and a nature according to effect or consequence, usually visible to some degree. Paracelsus explained that these spheres of the four elements are subject to a certain kind of scientific analysis, if man possesses internal faculties beyond the objective sense perceptions.

Man, by virtue of his own constitution, lives in a world of three dimensions, but he is surrounded by a universe in which there are an infinite number of dimensions beyond human experience. A dimension is more than a mere division or expression of extent and expanse. The element spheres expand into dimensions beyond us, and are finally lost to our comprehension in the concept of space, which is actually the reservoir of dimension. There are forms in nature which are not three-dimensional or two-dimensional or one-dimensional, as we apply such terms. There are also forms in which there are many more dimensions than we have ever recognized. Paracelsus further believed that man

possesses powers and latent faculties by which it is possible for him to gradually become aware of a many-dimensional universe. This will mean the ultimate conquest of space through the realization that there is no such thing as space, but merely an infinite expanse of unfolding areas of visible or invisible, known or unknown life, energy, and substance. There is no vacuum in the universe, and the nearest thing to a vacuum, according to Paracelsus, was the brain of one of his fellow professors at Basel University.

Man, on certain occasions, may be able to break through some of the dimension-binders which hold his consciousness in psychological restraint. This can occur in sleep or in the dream state. Paracelsus belonged to that group of philosophers who maintained that our comparative ignorance on the subjective side of our own lives was due mostly to our hypnotic addiction to objectivity. The consciousness of the small child, not having been adversely conditioned by what we call the reasonable, retains faculties by which he may penetrate some of the dimensional boundaries and become aware of invisible creatures, or participate in experiences which are not of this world. Later, however, ridicule and the pressure of common opinion contribute to the loss of the extra faculties and their perceptions.

To make his point as simple as possible, Paracelsus devotes some consideration to the element of water. We all know that the seas and oceans, rivers and streams, and even the old family rain barrel, are worlds populated with living things, whose ways of life differ from our own, but are well adapted to the element in which they exist. Visible water is only a small part of the liquid element. The whole sphere of water, visible and invisible, terrestrial and sidereal, may therefore also be a habitable region. Could we see this region, it might unfold as a varied and wonderful landscape. There could be rocks composed only of the humid principle; mountains and valleys, plants and animals, some resembling human beings, others without any correspondence in our mortal experience. Actually, all this wonderful world is differentiated within one substance only. It is not a compound, but this does not mean that

it cannot support or advance the destinies of the creatures developing within it. If nature produces a sphere, or plane of substance or activity, it does not leave this creation lifeless and forlorn. Every dimension of environment sustains living things, even as the visible earth sustains its diversity of flora and fauna. Thus there is a two-fold world of earth—one visible, and the other invisible; and the same is true of water, of fire, and of air. These elements are also worlds, and these worlds are inhabited.

The creatures of such invisible planes are called by the Paracelsian mystics *elementals*. This is because each is composed of a single element, with both the advantages and disadvantages of an uncompounded constitution. All elementals differ from human beings in two respects: first, they have a body composed of only one element; and second, they do not have a soul, because the soul itself arises in compound bodies and cannot find a habitation appropriate to itself in forms composed of single elements. Actually, in the case of elementals, spirit, soul, and body, are not differentiated because these creatures have not been individualized as man has been. Being thus undifferentiated, they do not possess moral natures; that is, they are amoral; they are neither good nor bad. In this, they resemble animals. They do not worship, nor do they fear any evil. They are not frightened by death, nor are they constituted for immortality. They have an existence without conflict. Because there is no stress or pressure, as must exist in compound beings, their constitutions are not subject to wear or exhaustion. These elemental beings can therefore exist for a very long time in comparison to man, and when their existence ends, they dissolve again into the substance from which they came.

Because all four elements are material but not physical, their corresponding beings are also essentially material, though not physical, as we understand that term. They are subject to the laws of generation, and attain a certain gradual evolution within the elemental field to which they belong. By their constitution, however, the growth which they attain advances the element itself rather than the nature of the separate beings.

Paracelsus, following the concepts of Greece, Egypt, India, and China, divided elemental beings into four groups. Of these, he considered the earth-spirits, or the gnomes, to be those most closely associated with matter; the water-spirits, he calls undines, or nymphs; the fire-spirits, salamanders; and the air-spirits, sylphs. Paracelsus also indicates that the elementals not only live within their particular elements, but are the administrators of the processes associated with the elements. In other words, we seem to perceive a certain intelligence operating in the relationships of elements and creatures. We observe the growth of metals in the earth, and how fishes have a certain instinctive knowledge of the rules governing their own existences. This is likewise true of animals, birds, and of the larger expressions of elements in storms, the formations of clouds, whirlpools, eddies, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

It is scarcely necessary for us to enlarge the stories relating to elementals. We can, however, summarize the Paracelsian concept. Elementals are divided into races and groups. They have their homes; they are ruled over by kings and princes; they perform innumerable tasks, busying themselves in their world as we busy ourselves with the problems of our dimension and existence. Occasionally, these elementals come into our own sphere of awareness because our natures include the substances within which the elementals exist. Legends like the story of Undine, the beautiful accounts of the Greek nymphs, and of gnomes revealing their treasures to mortals for whom they have a friendship, are regarded by us as pure fiction, but Paracelsus recommended that the subject be given further examination.

In his philosophy, Paracelsus also differentiated an entirely different group of invisible creatures, referring to them as elementaries. At first, the terms might seem confusingly similar. We must remember that an elemental is a natural creature derived from the flesh that is not the flesh of Adam, and belonging to the orderly procedure of creative processes in the universe. By contrast, the elementary is an artificial being, created in the invisible worlds by man himself. In harmony with more recent findings, Paracelsus noted that most elementaries seem to be of an evil

or destructive nature. They are generated from the excesses of human thought and emotion, the corruption of character, or the degeneration of faculties and powers which should be used in other, more constructive, ways.

A good example of the Paracelsian elementary is the incubus. This is a kind of demon which exists because when God created Adam, he breathed into him the divine power. Man is therefore a creator, not merely in the terms of the perpetuation of the species, but especially in terms of the imagination. Man is creative in arts, sciences, and philosophies, but his creative powers are not only external, but also internal. Because he lives, man bestows life, and he can generate creatures from his thoughts and emotions, even as from his flesh. The power to create is the power of vibration, by which anything is set into a peculiar motion. This motion is itself immortal, and contributes its own power to other things forever. The invisible progeny of man include thought-forms and emotion-forms. These are like infants, especially in their beginnings, for they depend upon their creator for their nutrition and survival. Later, however, if the forces which generate them continue to operate, these thought and emotion-forms gain strength, finally attaining a kind of independence which is their immortality. Having thus become even stronger than their creator, these thought or emotion-forms will turn upon the one who fashioned them, often causing in him a terrible habit and destroying his health and happiness.

Man may also create by the power of his speech. Among Orientals, addicts to hashish and other drugs have reported their ability, while under the influence of these narcotics, to see words coming out of the human mouth. These words appear as luminous forms or patterns. Paracelsus tells us substantially the same thing. Entities thus created by thought, emotion, or the spoken words, are further sustained by the continual flowing of energy from the person. If such support is not sufficient a kind of vampirism sets in, and the elementary, like a parasitic plant, drains the energy of the human body to support its own growth. It becomes a psychic tumor, surviving at the expense of the organism to which it is attached.

Much of the information gathered by Paracelsus relating to the incubus is interesting from a psychological standpoint. We know that the human psyche can become ridden with pressure-centers or pressure-patterns which we call *fixations, complexes, phobias*, and the like. We know that these negative psychic formations are nourished by the continual repetition of the attitudes which caused them. We say that negative attitudes become habitual, by degrees taking over and destroying the mental and emotional integrity of the individual. A fixation, well nourished by attitudes suitable for its perpetuation, intensifies, becoming actually avaricious and resolved to dominate or possess the entire life of its unhappy victim. This again suggests the Paracelsian analogy between the incubus and the parasite. Just as a beautiful orchid, or the mistletoe plant, lives partly from the air and partly from the tree to which it is attached, so the incubus, or the phobia, is an unlawful being, surviving not because its roots are in nature, but at the expense of another living organism whose vital forces will be vampirized.

Modern thinking, therefore, sheds a light upon the concept of elementaries, extending beyond the basic research of Paracelsus. We observe today the tremendous increase in mental pathology. We know that attitudes which become more and more fixed lead to what science calls a state of *obsession*. Paracelsus used the term obsession to signify possession by an entity. Today the term is used to signify possession by an abnormal attitude. What is the fact of this matter? Is it possible that the abnormal attitude has gradually become an entity? We may prefer not to assume such a belief, but how can we completely explain the peculiar and continuous undermining of the consciousness and morality of a human being? Once a destructive attitude has come into possession of a life, the person is gradually devoured by that attitude, which appears to become more and more possessive. Many persons under psychological obsession resist treatment, as though some foreign creature were fighting for its own survival in them. Often, indeed, in a mental illness, the patient, instead of desiring to recover, becomes defensive of his ailment, defending abnormalcy more courageously than he would ever defend normalcy.

Much has also been written on the subject of vampires, the mysterious undead who live upon the blood of the living and can be destroyed only when a stake is driven through their hearts. In Paracelsian psychology, the vampire also plays an interesting role. There seems to be an analogy with what might be termed *collective manias*. To become a vampire, we must first be the victim of a vampire. This evil creature can function only at night, and must sleep forever in its own earth. Many psychological ailments seem to be communicated by the pressures of one person adversely influencing the life of another. We have great psychoses, shared by multitudes of persons, such as fear of war, crime, sickness, poverty, and death. Once we have been attacked by these fears, we become like them. We perpetuate negative thought and emotion-forms, preserving our own bad habits by causing others to share them. Destructive thought-patterns therefore organize into groups, and in each of these groups, there are millions of persons exemplifying the same destructive and morbid tendencies. These, according to Paracelsus, result in collective thought-forms, which will become attached to persons who make themselves available through a basic kind of negation. The individual then simply becomes receptive to the pressures of his world, allows these pressures to move in, until he finally becomes another unit in the pressure-group, adding his negative influence to the already tragic condition.

In the Paracelsian doctrine, there is, however, a solid sense of justice. In order to be a victim of elementaries of any kind, the individual must be potentially given to excessive attitudes or destructive habits. The kindly person, fully occupied in useful endeavors, will not open his nature to infection or contagion. Actually, the elementary is closely associated with imagination, which can be a distorting and deforming force in the life of the individual. In the aloneness of his private living, the melancholy person becomes filled with self-pity, deludes himself, convinces his mind that he is the victim of injury or neglect, and finally prepares his nature for the development of one of these psychic entities. Recovery must therefore be a reversal of process, in which faith, friendship, understanding, tolerance, and good humor break the vicious circle and deprive the obsession of its needed nutrition.

Out of his philosophy of elementaries, Paracelsus came to the conclusion that a very large part of what we consider to be physical disease, results from psychic parasites generated by wrong thought and emotion. He did not go so far as to insist that attitudes are the sole cause of sickness, but he regarded them as extremely important factors. Furthermore, wrong attitudes will reduce the probability of recovery, and leave the patient without the proper energy for the reorientation of his career. Gradually, the obsessing entity or elementary sets up physical equivalents in the body, which symbolize the state of the soul and the interior sickness of the mind and heart.

Paracelsus was enough of a psychologist to recognize that the black magician of medieval sorcery is simply the black psychic side of ourselves. The dishonest person seeking to gain by unlawful ends certain securities or advantages normally reserved for those of proper attainments, becomes a kind of sorcerer who, with spells and incantations, tries to fulfill his own selfishness. Thus, a person living an apparently respectable life, but inwardly filled with hatreds, morbid emotion, and destructive attitudes, is creating another being within his own magnetic field—a kind of second and negative self. This is suggested in the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the Paracelsian period of human activity, it was believed that certain persons had attendant demons, or familiar spirits, who served their bidding for a time and then claimed the immortal soul of the magician. This is the Mephisto who attached himself to Faust, as the result of what has been called the *Faustian complex*. This Mephisto is ever whispering in our ear that we may do as we please, regardless of consequences, and we agree because we desire to agree; but if we follow this course and listen to this demoniacal voice, our satanic imp will ultimately carry us away to his own infernal region.

Contrary to general opinion, Paracelsus did not believe that our private elementaries, demons, and vampires, could go out from us and hurt the persons we hate or wish to injure. The elementary cannot exist except within the energy-field of its own creator. Destructive emotions or hatreds, therefore, can never escape from us, but having been

generated and allowed to flow into the energy-field, they return to us again in the forms of various disasters. The hate we turn upon another strengthens only the power to hate in ourselves. For this reason, the doctrine is soundly ethical. Our own evil destroys us, usually so slowly and mysteriously that we do not understand the procedure. We are reminded always that evil is its own punishment, even as good is its own greatest reward.

Paracelsus also had another theory which perhaps will seem incredible to us, yet it deals with a subject which we have never satisfactorily solved. This has to do with the problem of germs, bacterial organisms, and viruses—those microforms of life that are so dangerous to the health of ordinary mortals. Paracelsus believed that the germ, or its equivalent, is a psychic entity created by creatures possessing mental and emotional powers. He pointed out that epidemical disease usually accompanies outbreaks of destructive human intensity. War, for example, is nearly always accompanied by a plague, and also by violent seismic disorders.

By this way of thinking, the Swiss Hermes points out the danger of overloading those processes of nature by means of which physical, emotional and mental pollution is neutralized or overcome. We are now concerned with water pollution and with the pollution of air, as in the smog problem. Paracelsus believed that the psychic fields of the world, which must absorb the psychic toxins arising from the negative dispositional characteristics of mental and emotional creatures, can become so polluted that they can no longer cleanse themselves with sufficient rapidity. The result is the rise of psychic toxin in the energy field of the planet. As all creatures inhabiting this planet must derive their energies and life substances from this field, its pollution causes widespread lowering of vitality and morality. When this occurs, the general health and optimism of the race are afflicted. People complain of intangible ills, and are inclined to a common morbidity or to the neglect of activities which are healthful and psychically normal and sustaining.

Paracelsus therefore believed that the solution to the problem of health was the realization that only the wise and the good can be happy

and well. This does not mean that Paracelsus himself was never ill. He realized that he lived in a society which made freedom from sickness almost impossible. He believed, however, that we could minimize our dangers through the cultivation and preservation of defensive vitality. We can keep our psychic nature free from elementaries, and protect our energy fields from the parasitical attitudes which drain our vital resources. In early works on medicine, it is often noticed that representations of diseases are in the form of clouds of demon-like insects. These attack the sick man from all directions, and most certainly represent the evils in his own nature contributing to his discomfort.

Paracelsus was a minister of good will among men. He believed that it was the duty of the human being to establish constructive relationships with the intelligent universe existing around him. Nature is by essential purpose kindly and benign, and has provided man with innumerable resources and opportunities, but through the perversion of his power, and the pollution of his mental-emotional life, man has created a situation which has caused him to assume that the world is evil. If, however, he establishes harmonic sympathies with universal life, he will make friends he knows not of.

We are reminded of the story of the kindly peasant to whom the earth-dwarfs cheerfully revealed their treasure. Even as the incubus is the product of man's destructive emotion, so there is a guardian angel, generated from good thoughts and right emotions. There are good spirits to attend the good man, because he has created them, and they serve him gladly. He is rewarded according to the merit of his deeds, and if he finds depletion and depression invading his life, he should realize the strange chemistry of the elements and principles upon which he depends for existence. Through the proper use of his faculties, man builds a wonderful armor of protection around his life.

*Manly Palmer Hall*

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## THE NATURE SPIRITS

### *According to Paracelsus*

The belief in the existence of sub-mundane spirits was universal among the peoples of the ancient world. Primitive religious orders included in their rituals elaborate formulas for the propitiation of elementals and demons.

Among the Chinese, there were gods of roads and gateways, spirits that watched over rice and silk, and household gods for whom offerings of food were duly prepared. The Shinto faith of Japan is a worship of nature and natural forces; this religion abounds in fables and beliefs about elementals, spirits that live in the air and trees, and take upon themselves the form of foxes. India has its *devas*; the Persians, *devs*; the Arabs, their *peris*. Among the Nordic people, there was the race of the Nibelungs, the dwarfs who guarded the great treasures which had been accumulated by the Nibelungen people since the formation of the earth. The Irish believe in their "little people." There is a tradition that Ireland was originally entirely populated by elementals, and that these little beings retired into the bogs and fens when human beings came and usurped their empire. The American Indians had their "little Indians," their "cave Indians," and their "water tribes," whom they both feared and honored.

It was among the Greeks and Romans, however, that the worship of the sub-mundanes was idealized as an integral part of a scholarly, philosophic paganism. Each stream, pool, and tree had its nymph or dryad. There were satyrs in the forest, hamadryads in the glens, and pans down in the reeds by the river. There were *lares* and *penates*, a whole world of invisibles, some playful and capricious, others stern and solemn; some serving man, and others trying to ensnare him in magic and sorcery. There were temples for the nymphs, altars to the dryads, a general respect for all those mysterious people who, according to the words of Socrates, "live along the shores of the air as men live along the shores of the sea."

Paganism ceased in Europe in the closing years of the eighth century. Boethius had written his *Consolation of Philosophy*, and had been gathered to the gods of high Olympus. Christianity, a faith both persuasive and militant, had silenced the voice of great Pan, and was marching triumphantly toward the conquest of Europe. The old pagan lore vanished, to remain in comparative obscurity until the coming of one man who became the interpreter of the whole pagan world, its philosophy, science, and magic. That man was Theophrastus of Hohenheim, who took the name Paracelsus because he declared that he was greater than the Roman philosopher Celsus.

Paracelsus was a man of strange and stormy moods. He broke all the scientific traditions of his day by publishing learned works in German, the language of his people, rather than in the traditional Latin. He outraged his contemporaries by burning the books of Galen and Avicenna before a class of students at the University of Basel.

Paracelsus believed that knowledge should be sought everywhere, and that education should not be limited by the narrow privileges of scholasticism. He trudged up and down Europe, studying with gypsies, so-called witches, faith healers, herbalists, and all who claimed to possess any knowledge of the healing arts. Asked on one occasion why he had thus departed from the medical tradition of his time, Paracelsus

replied: "He who would understand the Book of Nature must walk its pages with his feet."

The principal teacher of Paracelsus was the mysterious adept Solomon Trismosin. It was from Trismosin that Paracelsus secured his knowledge of alchemical experiments. It is said that he finally accomplished the "stone" while in Constantinople.

The origin of his doctrine concerning nature spirits is obscure. He may have gained his information from the Arabs, who had elaborate teachings about these invisible people. He may have gained it from the witches and gypsies whom he knew. Be that as it may, he was the first to write a complete treatise on the subject, and his statements have become the source of innumerable works by later authors who merely have built upon his imagery.

All Europe became more or less affected by the mania for witch-burning. The subject of elementary spirits seems to have given way to the more popular works on demonology and witchcraft. The comparatively harmless and gentle nature spirits had little place in a scheme which attributed all metaphysical activities to the influence of the devil. Tens of thousands of people were burned at the stake before Europe emerged from its demon frenzy and settled down to the more gentle literary pursuits.

About the year 1670, the Abbe de Villars published a work entitled *The Comte de Gabalis*. This was translated into English ten years later, and "printed for B. M., Printer to the Cabalistical Society of the Sages, at the Sign of the Rosy Crucian." This book, which explains "the extravagant mysteries of the Cabalists in five pleasant discourses," caused a considerable stir. Some took the work to be merely fiction; others conceived a more profound meaning. It was even intimated that the Abbe had exposed some of the most profound secrets of Rosicrucianism. This belief gained ground when de Villars was assassinated, presumably as the result of his literary efforts.

The book introduces to the reader a mysterious man who spoke French with the accent of authority, and who gave his name as the Comte de Gabalis. This name is derived, of course, from *Cabalis* with one letter changed. The Comte claimed to be on the most intimate terms with the elemental beings whose lives and customs he describes, frequently in the exact words of Paracelsus, but with embellishments such as are natural to the French mind. The hypothetical Comte develops the Paracelsian theory to explain the birth of man, heroes as the result of the union of human beings and elementals. He names Merlin the British mystic, as an example, again cribbing, from Paracelsus.

Alexander Pope borrowed material from the Comte de Gabalis for his heroicomic poem, *The Rape of the Lock*. In a letter Pope writes: "The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which, both in its size and its style, is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders." Unfortunately *The Rape of the Lock* does not add much to the general store of information on the subject of elementals except in one respect. In the first canto, Pope implies that various kinds of human beings, after death, become elementals as:

*"The graver prude sinks downward to a Gnome,  
In search of mischief still on earth to roam."*

This opinion seems to be original with the poet, for Paracelsus clearly states that the elementals are a kingdom apart, of a different stuff from man.

In this modern time, the mind turns naturally from the metaphysical to the physical. We no longer believe in the reality of the nature spirits, but in spite of our unbelief, we have not and cannot actually disprove their existence. It seems that there must be some substance behind a belief that has flourished in every civilization of the world and in every age of time. Science acknowledges that many mysterious and intelligent operations are constantly taking place in nature, yet the scientist can

offer no complete explanation for a great number of these mysteries. It may be that unbelief is a defense mechanism against superstition, but Lord Bacon said on one occasion: "There is nothing more superstitious than to be without a superstition."

The essay by Paracelsus on elementary beings is in the complete edition of his works, of which we have the edition of 1618. It appears among several short essays on various subjects. Paracelsus was a wastrel with words, as were most of his contemporaries. We have therefore eliminated some of the useless verbiage and repetition, but reproduce herewith for the first time in English his complete essay on the nature spirits.

As a number of books have appeared in modern times, some of them of a highly extravagant nature, dealing with this curious subject, it appears timely to present the most authentic work available on the subject, written by a scientist whose achievements are acknowledged and whose contributions to medicine have conferred upon him immortality and universal approval.

# BOOK OF NYMPHS, SYLPHS, PYGMIES, AND SALAMANDERS, AND KINDRED BEINGS

*by Theophrastus of Hohenheim*

The contents of this book treat of the four kinds of elemental spirits; namely, those of water, earth, fire, and air. To this class of beings also belong the giants, dwarfs, and melosinae. All these creatures resemble human beings, can be seen at times, and otherwise cognized, and yet do not belong to the human race. They are not descended from Adam; they are creatures apart and different from both men and animals; yet they can mingle and associate with mortals. There can even be offspring from such associations and unions. But these children will not belong to the elemental kingdom, but to the human race.

How such things can be I shall explain in sequence:

1. *Their creation and what they are.*
2. *Their habitation and government.*
3. *How they approach us and become visible and mingle with us.*
4. *The origin of the giants and dwarfs, their distinction and appearance.*
5. *The miracles they can perform.*

A philosopher is supposed to prove many things from scripture, but it is not possible to do so in this case. The only biblical records that are obtainable are those concerning giants.

While the existence of elemental creatures may be doubted, their works must be considered sufficient proof of their existence.

As the sick need the physician, the Christian his Redeemer, and all things their masters, so are the elemental creatures necessary in the scheme of life. They represent certain forces, fill their place in nature, and were not created without purpose.

### **1. Their Creation and What They Are**

There are two kinds of flesh, the flesh derived from Adam and the flesh that is not from Adam. The flesh of Adam is coarse, earthly flesh that is tangible and can be held and tied. The flesh not from Adam is subtle and cannot be bound or held because it is not derived from the earth. The flesh from Adam cannot pass through solids; it must have openings in order to pass through. The flesh not from Adam passes through solid substances and needs no door. Yet it is flesh, blood, and bone, and is as real as human flesh. There are two sources, two fathers, two origins.

You must understand the two kinds of flesh if you would know the elemental people of whom I speak. They differ from man though they resemble him. They have flesh, blood, and bone. They speak, eat, and drink; wander about and bear children. Yet they are not human, nor are they truly spirit. They are swift like spirits, yet in many ways resemble man. They partake

of both spirit and matter, yet they are apart from both, being more like a conjunction of them, like a mixture of sour and sweet, or of colors blended.

Man has a soul; the elemental has no spirit. Elementals are not like spirits, for they are mortal; but they are not like men, for they have no soul as man has. They are like animals which die; but they are above the animals, for they speak, laugh, and act like human beings, which is impossible to animals. Therefore, they are neither man nor beast. Like the apes who resemble men most in action, but are not men, or the pig whose anatomy is similar to that of the human being, yet remains only a pig, elemental creatures resemble man in a similar way. They are higher than human beings in some respects because they resemble spirits; but are without moral nature because they have no soul. Christ died for man to save the soul of man. He did not die for the elementals because these creatures were not derived from Adam.

Do not wonder that there are such creatures, for God is wonderful in all his work. The elementals are elusive. They are not seen at all times but only rarely, and only that we should know that they exist. Then they appear as in dreams.

God's wisdom is unfathomable, but it is wisdom to strive to understand the workings of our creator. Elementals bear children who are like themselves and not like the children of men. They are witty, rich, sensible, poor, just as we are out of Adam. They resemble us in all ways, only as man is made in the image of God, the elementals are made in the image of man. Each remains what he was created. As man cannot boast that he is God, these nature spirits cannot say that they have human souls even though they resemble us.

The elementals die like animals, wander about with spirits, even drink like men or animals; and like mortals, they die, disappear and are forgotten. Fire and water are no obstacles to them. In this they resemble spirits; and like spirits they cannot be confined. They multiply like mortals, and their natures are similar to human beings. They fall into sickness and achieve health. Their medicine is not like that of men, but pertains to their element. Their substance, habits, behaviors, speech, and virtues are similar to those of human beings. Some are gross, others more subtle. Their food is as man's; they eat and enjoy themselves. They spin and weave, and make their own clothes. They reason. They are wise in government. Though subhuman, they think like human beings; but being soulless, they do not worship God nor try to serve him. They are guided by a combination of instinct and reason. As man is nearest to God in mind and faculties, so among the animals the elementals are the nearest to man. So they are called people. They are a peculiar and wonderful creation.

## **2. Their Habitation and Government**

The habitations of the elementals vary according to the element in which they exist; that is, air, fire, water, or earth. The people of the water are called nymphs; those of the air, sylphs; of the earth, pygmies; and of the fire, salamanders. But more correctly the water elementals should be called undines; the air people, sylvestres; those of the earth and mountains gnomes; and the people of the fire, vulcani rather than salamanders.

Each race of elementals remains confined to its own element. The water people have no dealings with the ones of the

earth; nor the fire people with those of the air. Each race lives by itself and never associates with the other elementals. Only to man are they drawn, appear to him at times, and serve him so that he may recognize God in his wonderful creation and learn how all elements are peopled and ruled by divine law. The elementals existing in each of the four elements differ from one another in person, character, species, and habitation, yet they all resemble man.

We recognize the four elements and know that the man from Adam can exist and live only in air, which surrounds him as water surrounds the fish. Each elemental is created for its proper element. To the nymphs, the water is what air is to man. And as man wonders how the nymphs can live in the water, so do they wonder that man can live in the air.

To the pygmies, the rocks and interstices of the earth are the proper abode. Earth is the chaos (space) of the gnome or pygmy. They pass through earth and stone as easily as man passes through the air. What is space to them is not space to man, for he cannot pass through solid substances. The coarser the quality of space, the more subtle the creatures existing in it. Since the gnomes have a coarse sphere of life, they must be subtle. Man abides in a subtle space, therefore he is coarse of body. Space is divided according to the nature and personality of the creatures inhabiting it.

Each element is appropriate to its own creatures, as air is to man. The fish and the nymphs do not drown in the water. Each kind is healthy in its own element, but sickens and dies in other elements.

With God all things are possible, although man cannot comprehend all his works because of a limited understanding.

As to the food and drink of the elemental people, it must be understood that while water is the drink of man, it is not the drink of nymphs and gnomes and other elementals. While water quenches man's thirst, the elemental peoples have their own drinks, the chemistry of which we cannot fathom. They must eat and drink; but what is their food and what is their drink in their mysterious worlds? It is impossible to answer. We know only that their worlds are as suitable to them as ours is to us.

They clothe themselves according to their needs and means. They are discreet and chaste. They have their societies and governments as do the bees and the ants. Like the snow geese, they have their kings and queens. They have their leaders, not according to human law, but according to the law of their own nation—higher than the laws of animals, and lower than human laws.

God has dressed and made beautiful all of his creatures. Animals grow their clothing upon their bodies, but the elementals must work to fulfill their needs as do men. They labor according to the element in which they live. As God has given man the sheep for its wool, so he has given the elementals their sheep that we know not of in the spheres of fire, earth, air, and water. God dresses not only us, but also the nymphs, salamanders, gnomes, and sylphs. All are under divine protection and care. He clothes and guides all creatures; not only men, but many beings we know not of.

The elemental people have their days and their nights, their sleeping and waking as we have. They have the sun and firma-

ment as well as we. To the gnomes the earth and rocks are transparent. The sun shines through the earth for them, and likewise the moon and the stars. It is the same with the sylphs and salamanders. Therefore, they have their seasons, day and night, summer and winter. The rain and snow that is given to us also serves them through the wisdom and power of God.

It follows that elementals are subject also to bodily ills. They have sicknesses, fevers, and so forth. Yet after death they are like animals, and will not be raised by God at the resurrection.

### **3. How They Approach Us and Become Visible and Mingle with Us**

All that God creates he reveals to man so that man may have wisdom and knowledge in all things according to his desire. God has revealed the devil to man and has sent down angels from heaven so that man may learn how the angels can serve him.

So the Creator has allowed the elementals to associate and appear to man in various ways and at various times. Though the elementals are at certain times forced out of their own elements, this is necessary because they must demonstrate the mighty power of their creator. Man ever has wondered greatly to perceive living creatures in the four elements. Not only has man seen the nature spirits, but he has spoken to them. He even has lived and kept house with them.

Gnomes not only have been seen and spoken to, but often have showered treasures upon those human beings they have served and admired. The same is true of the forest and field people, and also the fire people.

Although man's body is coarse, the element in which it functions is subtle. For this reason, the elementals can stand our sphere for a time, but we cannot abide in theirs. This is why they can come to man and unite with him, but he cannot abide with them.

As God sends his angels to us to guide and guard our lives, and then recalls them again unto himself, so the elementals come among us. Nymphs come to us out of the water, make themselves known and seen, and then return to their element.

Since the elementals resemble man except in one respect, that they do not possess an immortal soul, it can be understood that if a nymph should appear to a man and he marries her, she can live with him and bear children. These children then are endowed with a soul because one parent is from Adam, and the other has received the gift of soul and immortality, and become a human being by the sacrament of marriage and union with God and man.

Except for the fact that man is united with God, the human being is in many ways inferior to these *unsouled* creatures of the elements. It follows, for this reason, that the elementals are eager to join man. They strive by many means and arts to attract and hold him. They have reason and knowledge, and realize the importance of becoming ensouled through man, and in this way; gaining freedom and power, and union with God through their offspring.

One well may wonder what is the ultimate purpose and aim of these numberless creatures of the elements who resemble man so closely.

It is important to know that not all elementals can approach man equally. The nymphs come first, the air people next; but the gnomes and salamanders very rarely unite with man, for they act as servants. It is rarest of all with the salamanders, who are very important in their work for man. The gnomes are more like phantoms; they are so agile and swift. Both are gifted with prophecy. They know the past, present, and future of humanity. They often warn and guide those to whom they are attached.

The nymphs will sit at the water's edge near their abode, where they can be seen and captured. The people of the forest are coarser, and never speak, although they possess organs of speech like the nymphs, who use the language of their land. The gnomes also speak, but the salamanders very rarely, for verbal utterance is most difficult for them.

The nymphs appear in human form and clothing, are beautiful and eager to tempt by their art. The forest people are shy and unstable. The salamanders are often seen in fiery form. They are visible floating over swamps, meadows, and fields but do not dwell with man. No one would be safe from fire in their presence. Sometimes they are known to associate with sorcerers and witches.

If a man has a nymph for a wife, she must be kept away from water, or she may vanish; nor must he offend her upon or near water. All the elementals have the greatest power when they are near to their proper element. The gnomes coin their own money in the currency of their land, and often give real money to those whom they serve. All are subservient to their Creator. By his wisdom we are led to behold his wonders.

Man has to work and make all that he needs, but these elemental people are provided by God with all that they need and wish.

If a nymph is married to a man, and they happen to be in a boat and he offends her, she will throw herself overboard and disappear. She might as well be dead for him; he never will see her again. Yet she is not dead, and he still is wedded to her. He cannot lawfully take another wife, for he is not divorced. He is bound to her for eternity, though she has departed from husband and children. If the man should nevertheless take another wife, the nymph will kill him, which has happened many times.

There are still other beings, belonging to the water element called sirens. They are more on the surface of the water than under it. They resemble misshapen human beings. These are monsters and miscreations born of two nymphs, just as monstrosities often are born of human beings. They become outcasts from the nether water-world and cannot multiply. They are variously gifted. Some sing, others make strange noises on reeds. God indeed has made many wonderful creatures.

The comet also is a monster or miscreation of the sun or the stars. They do not act like stars. They are ordered by God for other purposes. Comets also have their peculiar meaning and prophecies which I shall later describe.

The nymphs have a place where they can congregate and where they can meet human beings. Most of the nymphs are feminine, and they are eager to find and attract mortals. For that reason they chose a place astride of their own element, but in the natural element of man where it is possible that such meetings can take place. This place is called Venusburg. Venus was

the greatest and most famous of the nymphs. She is said to live still, and will continue to live until the end of days, when she will perish with all that is perishable.

She has chosen for her abode a lovely pool which is partly under a mountain. From there she built an ascending tunnel up to a cave where she could meet and ensnare humans in a mysterious way. Many wonderful and unbelievable stories have been told about these things. So strange, indeed, are these tales that they might almost be considered parables and symbolologies.

There is one story recorded in history about a nymph of Stauffenberg. In her tempting beauty she seated herself by the wayside, awaiting the passing of the lord of Stauffenberg, whom she had chosen for herself. So-called theologians say that this is but the devil's work, though they do not rightly know who or what the devil really is. But the wise theologian knows better.

Such happenings, of course, are not common—that a man should take a nymph to wife. When it does happen, it is for the purpose that man should become aware of the wonder-works of God.

This nymph who was married to the lord of Stauffenberg, lived happily with him until he conceived the idea that she was some form of the devil. He then cast her out, broke his vow, and took another wife. On the wedding day, the nymph gave him a warning, and on the third day thereafter, he was dead. The nymph was avenged and the adulterer punished.

It is well to be careful how men associate with the melosinae, for it is said that they are under the domination of the devil, who can change them the same as witches into cats, dogs, monkeys, and so forth.

#### 4. The Origin of the Giants and Dwarfs. Their Distinction and Appearance

Two other kinds of creatures belong to the elementals and were not born of Adam. These are the giants and dwarfs. St. Christopher was a giant, but of human birth. But certain other famous giants—as Bern, Sigenot, Hildebrand, Dietrich, and dwarfs like Laurin, have their origin in the world of the elementals. The giants come from the forest people; the dwarfs from the gnomes. Both are monsters and misbirths. These monster creations are as rare among elementals as they are among human beings. When such a birth occurs, God has again some special purpose in mind, which I do not now feel called upon to explain.

The giants and the dwarfs are alike in their great strength; also in that there is no propagation among them. They are born, live, and die with no heirs and no soul. The giants are the outcome of certain conjunctions, the same as comets, earthquakes, and so forth. Such things are not created according to common natural law, but for a reason that God alone knows, which can never be appropriately explained except lay the study of astrology. Comets, meteors, and other universal phenomena can be fathomed also only by this means.

#### 5. The Miracles They Can Perform

To sum up finally what I have written before, I now disclose that God has set guardians and watchers over all that he has made. In this way, the gnomes or pygmies are guarding all the treasures, metals, and precious stones hidden in the earth. There

are heaped-up treasures watched over by these little beings, so that nothing will be brought forth until the appropriate time. When the treasures are unearthed, the pygmies vanish, leaving behind them only stories and myths of their existence and work. First in one land, and then in another, mines are discovered, but never before the right time. Till the proper time, all they contain is under the control and guardianship of the little people.

It is the same with the salamanders, who are the guardians of the inner fires of the earth. In these fires are prepared the metals which later will be discovered by humankind. When the fires are extinguished, the pygmies set to work on the metals which the salamanders have left. When their work is finished, the mines are discovered. Man then comes to exploit the riches of the earth and the gnomes depart.

The sylphs, or people of the air, are in charge of all things external that have been prepared by the salamanders and gnomes, and then expelled from the interior of the earth. They also guard these valuable things until the time comes for man to inherit them.

The nymphs are the guardians and keepers of rich treasures hidden in oceans and streams, which also have been prepared and expelled by the salamanders and gnomes. These treasures they guard until man comes and takes them away.

The salamanders also create a kind of monster called the *zundels*. Their appearance and presence indicates or prophesies that the land where they are seen approaches its destruction, or that its government is about to fall. The appearance of giants heralds death and destruction, as do comets. Dwarfs indicate the approach of great distress and poverty to the people of the

land. Sirens presage the downfall of temporal powers, princes and lords, religious sects and creeds, and political parties.

The Creator wants his children to progress and become like himself. That which is against his plan, he destroys by his many agencies.

Lastly, the innermost causes and reasons for the creations of these various elemental beings is hidden from our understanding and knowledge. But at the end, all things shall be revealed to us, the greatest and the least, and the reason for all things.

The great sophists of this world, the learned in name only, will then be wiser than they are now. The real will be distinguished from the unreal; the wisdom from the unwisdom. Those who have written according to the truth, and those who have set down the untruth, to each will be measured out according to his merits. Not everyone will then be called a master or a doctor. The wheat will be divided from the chaff.

Blessed, then, will they be who in their time had an open mind and a true understanding. Then, what is in the heart of man will be written upon his brow.

I commend what I have written according to the truth of God to God, who will reveal the light of each according to how he let it shine in this world.

*Theophrastus of Hohenheim*